

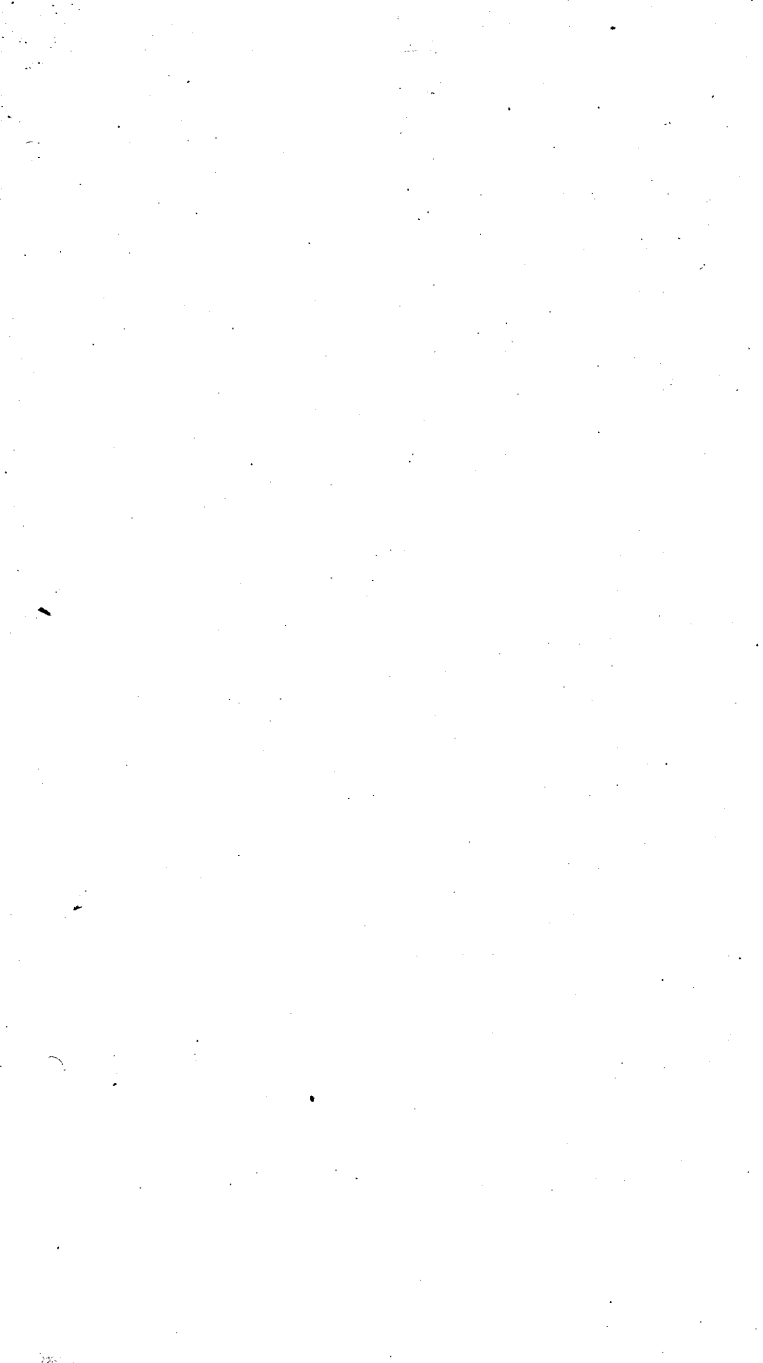
251

The University of Chicago  
Libraries



DURRETT COLLECTION





# SHORT SERMONS,

THE  
FOR  
THE  
FAMILIES AND DESTITUTE PARISHES.

BY

JOHN N. NORTON, D.D.

RECTOR OF ASCENSION CHURCH, FRANKFORT, KY.; AUTHOR OF "THE BOY WHO WAS  
TRAINED UP TO BE A CLERGYMAN," "ROCKFORD PARISH,"  
"LIFE OF BISHOP SEABURY," ETC.

Fifth Edition, revised, and enlarged to fifty-two Sermons, one  
for every Sunday in the year.

PHILADELPHIA:  
RICHARD MCCAULEY,  
1314 CHESTNUT STREET,

POTT & AMERY, NEW YORK; E. P. DUTTON & CO., BOSTON; STREET, MOORE & CO.,  
CHICAGO; MILWAUKIE CHURCH UNION, MILWAUKIE.

1868.



~~252.  
TV 885~~

Y1000 INT  
TO Y1000  
Y1000 000000

BX 5937

, N 8856

1868

473305

## PREFACE.

---

THE Author was once applied to for a contribution to a Church periodical, but pleaded a want of time as a reason for saying No.

"Well, then," rejoined our friend, "will you not furnish us with some fine passages from your sermons?"

The answer was returned in all sincerity, "There are no fine passages in them."

And so we assure the reader now, before he turns over another leaf.

Our only aim has been to deliver our message from God, in plain and simple words, which no one can fail to understand.

The *preaching* of these sermons has been attended with some profit, we humbly trust, to the souls of men.—God grant that the *reading* of them may not be altogether without effect!

## PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION.

---

THE author of "Short Sermons" has been gratified to find how much of a favorite the little volume has been with Lay Readers, and how many families have found it useful in their Sunday evenings at home. This third edition has been greatly enlarged, so as to furnish a discourse for every Sunday in the year. May God's blessing go with it!

# CONTENTS.

---

	SERMON I.	PAGE
Christ coming as a Thief,.....		9
	SERMON II.	
Influence after Death,.....		17
	SERMON III.	
Pride and its Punishment,.....		26
	SERMON IV.	
Looking unto Jesus,.....		36
	SERMON V.	
St. Paul in Britain,.....		43
	SERMON VI.	
Backsliding,.....		52
	SERMON VII.	
The Lack of Clergymen, and the Remedy,.....		61
	SERMON VIII.	
Sin of Selfishness,.....		69
	SERMON IX.	
Loss and Gain,.....		77
	SERMON X.	
Trustfulness, .....		86
	SERMON XI.	
The Rich Fool,.....		94
	SERMON XII.	
Lion-like Boldness of the Righteous,.....		104

	PAGE
SERMON XIII.	
Not Far from God's Kingdom,.....	112
SERMON XIV.	
The Love of the Spirit,.....	120
SERMON XV.	
*Special Providence,.....	128
SERMON XVI.	
The Saviour tasting Death for Sinners,.....	136
SERMON XVII.	
The Christian's Life-long Work,.....	144
SERMON XVIII.	
The Timid encouraged to Commune,.....	152
SERMON XIX.	
Steadfastness in the Midst of Danger,.....	160
SERMON XX.	
The Christian responsible for his Influence over others,.....	168
SERMON XXI.	
A Christian Woman's Mission,.....	176
SERMON XXII.	
The Duty of Fasting—An Exhortation for Lent,.....	184
SERMON XXIII.	
*Sickness,.....	192
SERMON XXIV.	
*Sudden Death,.....	200
SERMON XXV.	
Going up to Jerusalem,.....	208
SERMON XXVI.	
Degrees of Bliss in Heaven,.....	215
SERMON XXVII.	
*Recognition of Friends in another World,.....	224

# CONTENTS.

7

	PAGE
SERMON XXVIII.	
Blessedness of being Early in Christ,.....	232
SERMON XXIX.	
Christ's love for the Church, and our duties as members of it,	242
SERMON XXX.	
The Origin of the Prayer Book, and its Uses,.....	252
SERMON XXXI.	
The Widow of Sarepta,.....	266
SERMON XXXII.	
Anger; its lawful limits, and the way to Govern it,.....	279
SERMON XXXIII.	
Lying unto the Holy Ghost,.....	288
SERMON XXXIV.	
Parental Responsibility,.....	296
SERMON XXXV.	
The Bush that burned with Fire,.....	305
SERMON XXXVI.	
The Miracle at Cana of Galilee,.....	315
SERMON XXXVII.	
The Righteous flourish like the Palm-tree,.....	327
SERMON XXXVIII.	
Man taught by the lower orders of Creation,.....	336
SERMON XXXIX.	
The duty and privilege of building and adorning Churches,	346
SERMON XL.	
The Curse of Drunkenness,.....	354
SERMON XLI.	
The Ministry of Angels,.....	364
SERMON XLII.	
The Holy Child Jesus in the Temple,.....	375
SERMON XLIII.	
Satan and his Warfare,....	384

## SERMON XLIV.

Seeking after the Knowledge of God,..... 392

## SERMON XLV.

\* Honoring the Lord's Day,..... 402

## SERMON XLVI.

Family Prayer,..... 414

## SERMON XLVII.

God's Everlasting Kingdom,..... 423

## SERMON XLVIII.

Office of the Ministry,..... 433

## SERMON XLIX.

Reasons why all Christian people should be Confirmed,..... 445

## SERMON L.

Infant Baptism,..... 454

## SERMON LI.

\* The Intermediate State,..... 465

## SERMON LII.

\* Immortality of the Soul,..... 480

## SERMON I.

### CHRIST COMING AS A THIEF—AN ADVENT WARNING.

Behold, I come as a thief.—REV. xvi., *part of 15th verse.*

OUR SAVIOUR here speaks of His coming to judgment. He tells us that it will be sudden and unlooked-for. It is remarkable that such has always been the nature of Divine visitations.

How was it at the Flood? "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all." St. Luke xvii. 27.

The same suddenness marked the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. "They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." St. Luke xvii. 28, 29.

Thus silent and sudden, also, was the overthrow of Sennacherib. "The angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand." Isaiah xxxvii. 36.

Thus was Belshazzar surprised in the midst of his



riotous feast; and so, we are assured, it will be at the end of the world. "Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." St. Luke xvii. 35, 36.

In the text, our Saviour describes His coming under another figure: "*Behold, I come as a THIEF!*"

St. Paul uses similar language in one of his Epistles. "The day of the Lord so cometh as *a thief in the night*. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them." 1 Thess. v. 2, 3.

And again, St. Peter declares: "The day of the Lord will come as *a thief in the night*; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." 2 Pet. iii. 10.

The point of comparison is this: Christ's coming to judgment, like the approach of a thief at night, will be at a time when there are no indications of His nearness, and no general expectation of it.

A thief not only gives no warning of his intended attack, but is careful, if possible, to avoid all ground of suspicion. This statement shows that the various attempts of the conceited and the curious, rudely to unravel prophecy, and to settle the year, or the month, or the day, when Christ will come, are worse than vain.

On the other hand, the unbroken continuance of the

present arrangement of creation, is no proof that the Scripture will not be fulfilled, which declares, that "The heavens and the earth, which are now, are reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Pet. iii. 7.

Nay, we must flatly deny the truth of God, if we harbor any doubts on the subject.

Christ *will* come to judgment. He will come *suddenly*. Though all seems stillness and silence, His army of angels, shining with the glorious panoply of Heaven, is marching toward our world.

*Uncertainty* belongs, as a thing of course, to this present imperfect state. It is the spur of expectation. We know that something great and terrible is sure to happen; that *our* eyes shall see, and *our* ears shall hear; that the solid earth shall quake, and be dissolved; that the broad canopy of heaven shall shrivel, and fade away, at the approach of the devouring flames.

The only question of uncertainty is, *when* all this shall be.

"Behold, I come as a thief!" Who has not felt startled and alarmed by the cry of fire at midnight? the repose and security of sleep changed, in a moment, to a sense of danger and dread!

Thus sudden, but oh, how indescribably more terrible, will be the announcement of the Saviour's appearing!

The night of His second advent will be marked by

no alarming signs. The world may seem perfectly at peace. We may imagine the scene, upon a limited scale, by calling to mind what will happen in the town where we live.

Its inhabitants—some good, some bad—will have retired to rest, with the same conviction that the end is afar off. The public mind may be in a frenzied state of excitement about some approaching election, which absorbs all other thoughts. Great improvements may be in progress, and stately buildings going up. The buzzing wheels of manufactories are giving animation to the stagnant current of business; merchants receiving their fresh importations, to satisfy the increasing demand for luxury and ornament; schools, for the training of the young, in successful operation; money-lenders hoarding up their usury, and gladdening their eyes with the sight of the growing heap of wealth; ambitious demagogues tossing upon their sleepless pillows, and planning some new scheme for reaching the proud eminence they desire. Young and giddy ones are dreaming of long and happy days; business men, with their drowsy visions of the next morning's work, waiting to be aroused by the boat-whistle, or the signal from the cars. Multitudes, with all their thoughts confined to this poor world—multitudes, who had committed themselves to sleep without asking that God's watchful care might keep them safe; ungodly children under the same roof with devout parents, or wicked, sin-hardened pa-

rents, whose conduct had long been silently reproved by the lives of conscientious sons and daughters; a gentle and devoted wife, breathing a prayer at midnight for her careless, thoughtless husband, who had come home late from some scene of dissipation and debauchery; a mother, unable to rest, by reason of anxiety for her stubborn, rebellious son.

The weary hours move on. The fleecy clouds, like a vail of finest gossamer, spread themselves over the face of the silvery moon. The stars march on silently in their appointed ways, with their stately and majestic tread. Who dreams of the fulfillment of the words, "*Behold, I come as a thief*"?

What means that dazzling brightness in the distant East? Why do moon and stars grow pale? What is that throne of light, with massive wheels of blazing fire? What that myriad of angel forms, marching forth from the four corners of the heavens, like bristling battalions, armed for avenging war, and sounding the shrill trumpet, long and loud, causing earth's deepest valleys and darkest caves to send back echoes which awake the dead?

Who is that, in human shape, with crown and sceptre, sitting upon the throne, as it rises in mid-heaven, in the sight of the universe?

It is the SON OF GOD, come to judge the quick and the dead, according to His own sure promise—come, suddenly and unlooked-for, "*as a thief*"!

Withdraw your eyes from that dread scene, and

mark the change in the appearance of the town which we saw so lately the picture of calm repose. Its inhabitants now are all wide awake. Who has thoughts to waste upon the election, which had seemed a matter of such engrossing interest? Those half-finished buildings, do the workmen have any care for *them*? Will the operatives from the manufactories, think you, resume their task to-day?

The merchant, though so thoroughly aroused, has not moved one step toward his well-filled store. The children at the schools have forgotten their books, and the tasks which had been learned the night before.

Has the money-lender and the speculator brought his bonds with him, as he rushes in affright along the confused and crowded streets? How many chances, in the lottery of political advancement, would that keen lawyer give for *any* hope of God's favor at this hour!

Are those young men thinking of their debaucheries and revelings now? Indeed they are; but not with the satisfaction they once did, when they felt it manly to boast of their shameful deeds.

Do the votaries of fashion care at all, in this moment of universal terror, for the flounces and furbelows which so lately seemed as dear to them as life? Will that ball dress and those bridal wreaths be worn to-morrow?

The people who had gone to bed without praying,

are they quite satisfied with themselves, now that the JUDGE is calling them to account?

That worldly-minded husband, who laughed at the idea of connecting himself with the church, when his minister spoke to him of Baptism and Confirmation, how does he like the thought of being separated forever from her who had been the light of his eyes, and the idol of his heart?

Would that headstrong, unruly son be sorry *now* if, like the mother whose words he has so much despised, he could look up to the JUDGE upon the throne as a Saviour and a Friend? Would *any* sinner be sorry if, like the righteous, he could behold the coming of the King of glory without dismay, and say, in holy transport, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him; He will come and save us"?

Oh! it is a harrowing thought, that some whom we know and love must join in the wail of terror and remorse which will go up from the unpardoned and unsanctified, and say to the rocks and mountains, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of HIM that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the LAMB!"

Blessed be God, the day of doom has not yet dawned. Blessed be His name, the kindly warning is repeated still, "*Behold, I come as a thief!*"

Our Saviour observes in one of his parables: "If the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." St. Matt. xxiv. 43.

We *know* that the judgment is not far off. And because we are not *certain* whether it will be to-morrow, or next week, or next month, is that a reason why we should be indifferent about it?

My friends, are we all trying to be ready for the second coming of our Lord?

Those who pray earnestly, and attend church regularly, and receive the Lord's Supper thankfully, and give of their means bountifully, and who keep themselves unspotted from the world, *are* making such preparation.

For such, there is nothing alarming in that declaration of the Saviour, so full of terror to the disobedient, "*Behold, I come as a thief!*"

## SERMON II.

### INFLUENCE AFTER DEATH.

He, being dead, yet speaketh.—HEB. xi., *part of 4th verse.*

OF others, besides righteous Abel, is this startling statement true. The graves of rich and poor utter their salutary warnings to the living.

The departed one may have been altogether unlettered and uncared for, but the green sod which covers him cannot silence the voice which speaks to some who knew him upon earth.

The eloquence of the senate and the courts may thrill, and animate, and convince; but there is an eloquence more persuasive, more powerful than these—the eloquence of the *dead*. Even the deaf must hear. Its warnings do not fall upon the ear, but spring up spontaneously in the memory and the heart.

Those who spend their days on earth usefully and well, live after death by their example. A father's worth, and a mother's care, and a neighbor's kindness, will be remembered long, and, in many cases, be imitated by those who come after. The upright live after death by their precepts. They may have been wholly disregarded by those to whom they were first



addressed; but the good seed will take root, and, sooner or later, yield fruits of increase.

On the other hand, we are told that '*the name of the wicked shall rot.*' Proverbs x. 7. Their influence may have been exceedingly great, but it shall become less and less, until it wholly dies away.

If any one desires, then, that his name shall be remembered after death with feelings of gratitude and satisfaction, let him strive to be good.

The subject will well repay us for further expansion and illustration.

I shall begin with an example close at home.

I. A MOTHER'S *influence after death.* — Volumes might be filled with testimonies to the truth of this point.

How indelibly a parent's image must have been imprinted upon Cowper's mind, when the sight of her picture drew forth those sweet and moving lines:

"My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,  
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?  
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?  
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,  
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,  
And, turning from my nursery window, drew  
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu."

Did that mother, think you, though dead, ever cease to exert an influence upon her son?

"When I was a little child," says a second witness,

"my mother used to bid me kneel beside her, and place her hand upon my head while she prayed.

"Before I was old enough to know her worth, she died, and I was left too much to my own guidance. In the midst of temptations, whether at home or abroad, I have felt myself, again and again, irresistibly drawn back by the pressure of that same soft hand. A voice in my heart seemed to say: 'Oh, do not this wickedness, my child, nor sin against God!' I did not dare to disregard the call."

"It was a cool, autumnal evening (is the testimony of a third witness) in my sixth year. My mother sat in the corner of the fire-place at the right, and just upon her left hand I sat, on the large hearth-stone, amusing myself with some childish sport. After watching me for some time, she dropped her knitting in her lap, and remarked, in a mellow, subdued tone: 'My son, I wish I could live to see you as much engaged in serving God, as you are at your play!'

"She said not another word. But it went directly to my heart. I wiped a tear from my eye, and resumed my task. This expression of my mother's wish, recalled in after years, led me to begin the service which she so much desired. After the lapse of more than a quarter of a century, I love to think of that quiet hour. The seed then sown sprang up when my mother was at rest in the grave."

But why multiply words? Who has not heard of reprobate sons, after years of prodigality and vice,

stopped short in their course by remembrances of scenes of innocence and peace, in which a mother's anxious concern, a mother's reproving look, and a mother's gentle voice, speaking from the dead, exerted an influence more powerful than she could possibly have possessed while sitting under her own roof, and by her own fireside?

Let Christian parents use this influence well, and the effect of their instructions shall never die.

II. A TEACHER'S *influence after death*.—The instructor's office is seldom estimated aright. He takes charge of the child at the most important period of its life. He finds the mind in a rude, chaotic state. He promises, by the help of God, to form and fashion it anew.

How many difficulties to be overcome! How much discretion to be used! How much patience to be shown! How much resolution to be summoned! How much skill in taking advantage of times and circumstances! How much perseverance is indispensable!

Can dollars and cents pay for this? Will a punctual settlement of the term-bills cancel all sense of obligation which parents and pupils should feel toward one who does so much? It *ought* not, it *cannot* be.

The teacher's name will never be forgotten. His kind offices will be held in lasting remembrance.

The tear of fond regret will glisten in the eye, as the scholars, grown to adult age, make mention of

their old teacher—the teacher in his grave. *He, being dead, yet speaketh.*”

Have not instructors a high incentive to prove themselves faithful?

III. *The PHILANTHROPIST'S influence after death.*—

He has a double drudgery to perform. Old rubbish must first be cleared away. Opposition and opprobrium must be met. The keen tooth of ingratitude will wound. Indifference on the part of those who should countenance and sustain must be patiently endured. All this, before one step can be taken in the way of amelioration and reform.

Some, who wish and mean well enough, have a settled repugnance to give themselves trouble for the sake of another's good. They are satisfied with the ripe results of the past, and dislike the crudity of the present.

Here is one powerful obstacle in the path of the philanthropist. Again, Mammon meets him (the despotic and powerful god of this lower world), and urges, and argues that things had best be left alone.

Meanwhile, the philanthropist toils slowly on. The poor are judiciously helped. The prisoners are raised from the low, damp dungeon; and, though not screened from punishment, are usefully employed. Reformation stretches out its long and powerful arm, and, as by the magician's wand, corrects abuses far and near.

The philanthropist wears away his strength in la-

bors too great for man. His days on earth are done. Is this the *end*? No. "*He, being dead, yet speaketh.*"

We may not all be *philanthropists* on a large scale, but the humblest may, in some degree, do his work, and share in his reward.

The man who builds a church, or endows a hospital, or establishes an orphan house, will be remembered for ages. Aye, by the proper investment of a much smaller sum, he may be providing bread for the hungry, long after he has passed away from earthly scenes.\*

Kind and compassionate ones, go on in your useful ways. You are purchasing for yourselves *immortality*.

IV. *An AUTHOR'S influence after death.*—"Books," says Addison, "are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind."

All other arts of perpetuating ideas are, comparatively, short-lived.

Follow the pale, care-worn student to his closet—very likely a rude garret in some dilapidated, dreary house. Poverty and genius too often go hand in hand. With what perseverance he labors! He plans and executes; and then, dissatisfied with what is already done, he throws all aside, and resolutely begins anew. He weighs well his words, and squares each thought by the rule of reason and of truth. He develops some important theme.

\* For a beautiful instance of the last form of charity, see Mrs. Kirkland's "Holidays Abroad," Vol. I. p. 33.

Though all is dust and dinginess about him, he draws forth brilliant illustrations from a well-stored mind, and finishes a work which he hopes may benefit his race. The Press—that mighty engine for good or ill—scatters abroad the winged words. The author, in his *garret*, is speaking to the *world*!

What eloquent orator has a voice which will reach so far? The stirring speech and the impassioned sermon have their effect upon the multitude who are privileged to hear; but with them, the influence, in a great degree, must end.

The author dies. Not so his works. He still speaks through many lands by many tongues. Though already entered into his rest, he is, in reality, vigorously at work. He is moulding the minds, and influencing the hearts of untold thousands.

When will *Shakspeare* be dead? Bishop Wilson and Hannah More are quite as much alive this moment, in their golden treasures of devotion, as when actually dwelling upon the earth.

V. *The CLERGYMAN'S influence after death.*—His life may have passed noiselessly away. His preaching and practice may have harmonized beyond the possibility of fault-finding. But many who attended upon his ministrations will have remained unmoved. He will leave the world under the painful conviction that, so far as these individuals are concerned, his labor has been altogether in vain.

Such an impression, however, would be wrong.

Often and often there comes forth from the faithful pastor's grave a more persuasive and melting eloquence than from the herald of the Cross when standing in the pulpit. His spirit—the fragrant memory of his life—lingers with his flock, and “*He, being dead, yet speaketh.*”

VI. *The influence of every GOOD PERSON after death.*

The illustrations which have been used thus far have been *particular*, and hence *limited* to the classes named. The proposition now stated is *general*. Without exception, it may be safely said, that every righteous person who dies will still be doing good after his departure from the earth. Indeed, so true is this, that in one of the prayers in the Office for the Holy Communion, in commemoration of the sainted dead, we bless God's holy name, for the good examples of all His servants who have departed this life in His faith and fear, and devoutly pray that we may follow in their steps.

We may all leave behind

“Footprints on the sands of time”—

footprints which will serve as waymarks to the bewildered and the wandering who come after.

What an incentive, in reflections like these, for living holy lives! Will not all be stirred up by them to walk in good and useful ways? What great matter is it to live twenty, or thirty or even forty years, and then to be forgotten?

The pagan historian Sallust was wise enough to say, that "Since the life which we enjoy is short, we should try to make the remembrance of us as lasting as possible."

We may *all* be living after death in the grateful memory of the world, if we spend our days aright.

Let the place of our burial be where it may—upon the towering top of some craggy peak, like that of Aaron; let the breathless corpse be wrapped in slimy sea-weeds, or lost sight of in the sands of the trackless desert, or carefully laid in the safe enclosure of the cemetery or the church-yard, where the hand of affection may pluck away the weeds and nurse the flowers—in any and in every case, a voice will be heard, a sweet, persuasive voice—a voice to which the living will gladly hearken; and from many a soul, cheered and instructed by the silent influence of a departed friend, will come forth the grateful testimony, "*He, being dead, yet speaketh.*"



## SERMON III.

### PRIDE AND ITS PUNISHMENT.

The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?

While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed from thee.—DANIEL iv. 30, 31.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR had reigned over the kingdom of Chaldea for forty years. At the end of this long lapse of time, sated with victory, and weary of excitement, he determined to dwell at Babylon, and gather about him, in this city of his greatness, enduring monuments of his wide-spread renown.

Soon afterward he saw, in his midnight visions, a great tree loaded with fruit; but he had hardly looked upon it, before an angel descended from heaven, and gave commandment that it should be cut down, and its branches, leaves, and fruit, scattered.

The trunk and the root were to be left in the ground, and bound with chains, among the beasts of the field, for the space of seven years.

None of the diviners and soothsayers could explain the meaning of the dream; and it was Daniel who dis-

closed to the astonished monarch that it related to himself.

"*You*," said the prophet, "*you* are represented by the great tree: you are to be brought low—to be reduced to the condition of a brute; but you shall afterward be restored again to your former glory."

Having made this awful announcement, Daniel most kindly entreated him to "break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor," that the threatened vengeance might be at least delayed.

But this earnest expostulation was offered in vain. One year after the revelation had been made, it was most marvelously fulfilled.

In enlarging upon this portion of Nebuchadnezzar's history, with a view of improving its important lessons, we shall be guided by the three prominent points about which all the lesser details naturally cluster:—*his Sin, his Punishment, and his Repentance*. May the Holy Spirit of God imprint the truths upon our hearts.

I. It was no crime in Nebuchadnezzar that he was a great man. There was no harm at all in being the ruler of a mighty kingdom, provided that his elevation to so high a place had been accomplished by honest means. His sin was *pride*. His success, in every thing he undertook, called forth no gratitude to God. His constant prosperity only hardened his heart. He considered himself as the contriver of his

own fortune. He gloried in the strength of his armies. He feasted his eyes with the prospect of exhaustless riches. He looked down with contempt upon prostrate foes. He drank in with greediness the fulsome flatteries with which fawning courtiers filled his ears. Walking proudly upon the roof of his palace, from which he could command an extensive view of the mighty capital of his vast empire, his mind reveled in dreams of greatness and glory.

For more than fifteen miles, on either hand, the great Babylon, "the Golden City," "the Lady of Kingdoms," "the Beauty of the Chaldees' Excellency," "the Praise of the whole Earth," was spread out before him.

He gazed upon its massive walls and brazen gates; its citadel and towers; its royal palaces; its idol temples; its hanging-gardens, and its varied marks of beauty and magnificence, until the feelings of pride which swelled his heart found utterance in words of self-satisfaction and vainglory:—"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?"

Pride has its *degrees*. It is measured by circumstances. None of us can reach the giddy height where Chaldea's monarch stood. We cannot be guilty of that degree of pride which made up *his* fearful sin. But, so far as outward circumstances are favorable to its growth, we are quite as likely to be wrecked upon this rock.

The hero, of nerve and judgment, and military skill, who can direct the movements of armies, and plan the successful assault, and head the fierce onset, is *proud* of this.

The man of letters, who can read with fluency the languages of the dead, and tell the measure of the stars, and trace out the pathway of comets, is more than gratified with his complete success.

The individual possessed of neither genius nor learning, but who, by plodding industry and far-sighted investments, or by lucky speculations, gathers up a heap of gold, gazes upon it with heartfelt satisfaction, as the fruit of his labors.

We need not go into the higher ranks of life to witness the effects of pride. They may be found in the humblest mechanic, the farmer, the day-laborer of any sort, whose honest industry has secured for him the comforts of a home; he forgets that his FATHER in Heaven has given him strength to labor—has saved him from dangers and sickness, and crowned his efforts with success.

It was for the warning of us *all*, that Moses wrote those solemn words, once addressed to the stubborn Jews:—"Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, lest when thou hast eaten and are full, and hast built goodly houses and dwelt therein, and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied, then thy

heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, and thou say in thy heart, *My* power and the might of *mine* hand, hath gotten me this wealth." Deut. viii. 11-13; 14-17.

It was for the warning of us all, that the fate of Nebuchadnezzar has been recorded. And this brings us to the second stage in his history.

II. His *punishment*. Daniel had foretold it in these dreadful words:—"O king Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken; thy kingdom is departed from thee; and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven; and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the MOST HIGH ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever HE will."

No further time was allowed for repentance. The day of mercy had gone by. The same hour was the sentence carried into execution. The proud and boastful words had hardly escaped his lips, when his mind became so disordered, that he fancied himself changed into an ox, and at once assumed the habits of that animal, roaming through the fields, and eating grass. What a grievous, frightful fall! The mighty monarch of Chaldea brought down to such a state!

Had trembling princes bowed before his throne, anxious to win his favor, or turn aside his wrath? Now is he banished from the abodes of men, an object

of pity or contempt: "and none so poor to do him reverence."

Did a hundred provinces send in their yearly tribute, to swell the coffers of the king, and purchase dainties for his festive board?

Groveling in the dust, crushed in mind, lost to all the tastes and habits of a man, "he did eat grass like an ox."

Had the carved and gilded roofs of magnificent palaces shielded him from the heat and cold?

Not even a tattered tent was left. His body was wet with the dew of Heaven, and the pitiless storm spent its fury upon his defenseless head.

Had purple, and fine linen, and sparkling gems, adorned his royal person?

Naked, and loathsome, and abhorred, "his hairs grew like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws." Well might Isaiah exclaim, in bold, poetic figures, in reference to this wretched prince: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cast down, which didst weaken the nations!" Isa. xiv. 12.

Such was the *punishment* of pride. The *degree* of punishment is determined by the degree of pride. Few can be guilty to the extent that Nebuchadnezzar was. Few can fall so terribly and so low.

But pride is *always* hateful unto God. Pride will certainly be punished. "Every one that is proud in heart, is an abomination to the Lord." Prov. xvi. 5.

"God resisteth the the proud." St. James iv. 6. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Prov. xvi. 18. "A man's pride shall bring him low." Prov. xxix. 23.

Are the solemn declarations of God's word to be regarded as devoid of meaning? Shall He threaten, and will He not bring it to pass?

Can you call to mind no instances, within your own remembrance, in which pride has been most signally punished? Can you think of no one who boasted of the abundance of his wealth, afterward crippled by misfortune, and brought down to want and beggary? Have you heard of none, gifted with the highest power of mind, and idolized as the sons of genius, who have ended their days as raving madmen, or driveling idiots? Has the daughter of fashion, the matchless beauty, who bewitched and captivated by her charms, never been changed by disease into an object not only plain, but actually forbidding?

In all these ways, the Almighty has been punishing pride. Thus has He been repeating, with emphatic earnestness, the wholesome warning, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this: that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth." Jer. ix. 23, 24.

One stage more in Nebuchadnezzar's history is left.

III. His *repentance*. Seven long years of wretchedness accomplished that blessed work. Listen to his own touching account of it: "At the end of the days lifted up mine eyes unto Heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever and ever."

With humble and contrite heart he now confessed that God's judgments, although so terrible, had been good and just. This sincere acknowledgment received its merited reward. The glory and greatness of his kingdom was again restored. Councilors and lords sought his presence, and obeyed his will; and still more brightness shone upon his latter days, than that which had adorned his youth.

As if to make some atonement for his fault, by a full and frank confession, he published this declaration to the world: "I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride, he is able to abase."

How kind and merciful is God! The first and faintest prayer of the returning penitent is heard in Heaven. As soon as pride has been humbled, and the hardened heart made soft, he withdraws his chastening hand. He gives "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

We have all heard or read this story from our



earliest youth. It is too common to regard it as a gorgeous picture of an event long past, upon which we may gaze with wonder, but which conveys no warning to people of our time.

But the truth is, the same *sin* of which that king was guilty, is prevailing now. Nay, it is one to which the heart of man is chiefly prone.

The same *punishment*, limited, of course, by circumstances, is inflicted in these days.

The mode of relief—repentance and amendment—is still the same.

And how foolish it is to pride ourselves upon what God, of his bounty and goodness, has bestowed!

O vain man! "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 7.

Does the possession of money fill your heart with delight, and lessen your desire for better things?

God will find means to take it away.

Are the powers of mind which He has given, used only to advance your selfish purposes, or turned against the cause of truth?

The palsy or madness may be near, to put an end to your hopes.

Is beauty leading you astray, by exciting a desire for admiration, and causing you to waste your time in the preparation and putting on of gay and gaudy attire?

The brightness shall depart from your eyes, the roses shall fade from your cheeks. God *hates* pride, and he will grievously *punish* it.

Are any suffering under the rod of affliction? Let them take encouragement, from this history, to turn from their evil ways, and to expect the mercy and forgiveness which are promised to those who, by the dispensations of Providence, have been taught to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, that, in due time, He may lift them up.

## SERMON IV.

### LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

Looking unto Jesus.—HEBREWS xii., *part of 2d verse.*

THE scene opens in a dark and silent chamber. Doctor FRANKLIN is lying on his deathbed. For weeks and weeks he has been prostrate with disease. That active mind, which so long had been occupied with things of earth, was busied now with higher and nobler contemplations. He bids the nurse go down and bring a picture which he named, and fasten it on the wall opposite his bed, that he might look upon it when he pleased. And what think you that picture was? Some ancient historic heir-loom, which he dearly prized? Some scene of stirring interest, in which he, the great philosopher of his age, had borne a conspicuous part? No! It was a picture of our blessed SAVIOUR on the cross; and Doctor Franklin, whom many, in these evil days, have desired to make an infidel outright, died while gazing upon it with wistful eyes, his whole countenance lighted up with a sweet and placid smile. Poor and pitiable are the hopes of the moralist or the philosopher, who does not look to Christ Jesus as his Redeemer.

To what purpose, as we have stood by the bedside of our kindred or friends, so far as our hopes of their future happiness were concerned, to hear them say, like Socrates of old: "I go hence to good men and to to God, but of that I am not certain"? But, blessed be God's name, we have a sure and steadfast trust, which cannot fail.

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS." We behold HIM as crucified for us, and for *all* lost, undone sinners, on Good Friday. We rejoice at his resurrection at Easter. We recognize Him as God's own blessed Son—Christ, the King of Glory, the final Judge of quick and dead the only hope of all the ends of the earth.

Notwithstanding the encouragement which is given us in the Scriptures, to "look unto Jesus," in every time of need, and to trust in him, all our lives long, our hearts sometimes fail us, and we are almost afraid to believe that He will hear our feeble prayers, and accept our imperfect services. But what stronger assurance can we possibly require? He died for *you* and for *me*. He is your Saviour and *mine*. God has always loved us, and he gave his only begotten Son to suffer the death of the cross, that we might be delivered from the curse of sin.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS. How? Is it by dwelling upon him in our imaginations, until we can bring back, as in a faithful picture, the marred visage of "*the MAN Christ Jesus*," who, eighteen centuries ago, suffered

death on the cross, in Judea, and who afterward rose from the dead?

Is it by fixing our eyes upon such a representation of the incarnate Saviour, as we sometimes see in the fine windows of churches, or, on a smaller scale, in the frontispiece of our prayer-books?

There is no doubt that such pictures *do* impress many minds for good. But, after all that we can say about them, this effort of the imagination, to recall the events of the past, and this skillful attempt of the artist to portray the outward form of Him who was "wounded for our transgressions," can, at best, serve only as a *means* to an *end*.

The "LOOKING UNTO JESUS," referred to by the apostle, is an act of faith, and the exercise of undoubting confidence and love. Nevertheless, it is a faith which *shows* itself, nay, I should have said, which *proves* itself by outward acts of obedience.

See those parents bringing their child to holy baptism. Why do they do it? Because it is a time-honored, respectable ceremony? Because they desire to have it christened, as its forefathers have always been? (It is only within a comparatively brief space of time that any class of people have been heard of who did not believe in infant baptism.) Because it is a convenient occasion for bestowing what is called its "given name"?

No! These were not the motives which influenced their minds. Those parents were "Looking unto

JESUS." They remembered his tender care for little children, and how he set forth their simplicity and trustfulness, as patterns to grown persons who would seek for entrance into his kingdom. They are looking unto HIM to bless their offspring in this ordinance of his appointment, and to receive it for his own child by adoption.

Then, again, at the bishop's visitation, why do persons come forward to be confirmed and blessed by him? Is it only a form or ceremony? Is it simply a sham or show? Oh! I should tremble for those who dare to say or think so.

The candidates for confirmation, who have been properly instructed, are "Looking unto JESUS," when they thus kneel before his chosen servant, and receive the blessing which he is authorized to bestow. They are looking unto HIM as the GREAT CAPTAIN of their salvation, in whose holy service they thus solemnly enlist. They are looking unto HIM to give them strength to wage a good warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

And why is it that, month by month, God's faithful people draw near his altar, and eat of the living bread and drink of the cup of salvation? Is it a hypocritical act? Is it done in solemn mockery? or, is it designed to impose upon the world?

Ah! we are thus "Looking unto JESUS." We seek for fresh supplies of his gracious and ready help. We behold him, as it were, presiding at the heavenly

feast which his goodness has thus prepared for the weary and heavy laden soul.

Watch that poor, troubled one, as she retires to the privacy of the closet, and wrestles with God in earnest prayer. Some heavy weight of care is crushing her to the earth. No human power can lift it off. She has gone to the sanctuary for help. She is "Looking into JESUS."

Has not the promise been given by Him who cannot lie: "Call upon me in the time of trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou shalt praise me?"

Mark the hectic flush upon the cheek of the consumptive, and count the beatings of his wiry pulse. See unrelenting death, inch by inch, gaining ground in the contest with his victim.

But though life, with its sunny skies, and its flowery fields, is thus fading steadily away, no gloomy terrors darken the Christian's mind, no distracting doubts disturb his unwavering faith. He is "Looking unto JESUS."

Wasting health and decaying strength render the Saviour more and more precious to the believer's soul. The still small voice of his matchless love is whispering in the contrite sufferer's ear: "I have conquered death, and brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel."

Let us fall in with that funeral train as it moves slowly onward, bearing the corpse of a departed friend to its last resting-place. At length the spot is

reached, and all stand, with uncovered heads, around the open grave. The coffin is lowered to its place in solemn silence, and then—"Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust!" Such is the end of worldly hopes.

Nay, not the *end*. Listen to those consoling words which the minister of God is speaking now: "We commit the body of our deceased brother to the ground, looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We have thus traced the course of a fellow-mortal from his baptism to his burial. But, by the eye of faith, we can penetrate within the vail, and follow him beyond the narrow boundaries of time.

The archangel's trump awakes the sleeping dead. The eternal Judge is seated on his throne. The books are opened. Dismay and horror seize upon the guilty and unpardoned throng who stand upon the KING's left hand. And why should those on the right appear less anxious and unconcerned?

They are "Looking unto JESUS." That same blessed and merciful Redeemer, who died for them on the cross, whom they confessed before men in baptism and confirmation, and the Lord's Supper, and glorified in lives of faithful obedience, is now to be their judge. They know in whom they have believed, and they only await his summons to enter the joy of their Lord.



To what source are *you* looking for comfort and support, amidst the trials and troubles of life—the pains of death, and the awful realities of the judgment? Is it to any earthly thing? If so, your hopes will be sure to fail. You may live on in delusion, until the trying moment comes, and then, when the prop is most needed, you will find yourself leaning on a broken reed.

More than likely, you belong to that large class of unhappy people who only allow themselves to think of the *present*, and who have formed no plans, and made no provision for the *future*.

Is this wise? Is it right? Is it doing justice by yourself? Is it showing a proper respect to Almighty God? When He has taken so much pains to point out the *way* of salvation, is it asking too much that you should exert yourself a little to *walk* in it?

None of us have been left in darkness or doubt. God, of his mercy, has showed to us what is good and right, and what he wishes us to do.

Oh, do not set your heart upon this world! Live not for the present only. Make timely preparation for the hour of death and the day of judgment. Love God. Do not be ashamed of being a Christian. Lay up treasure in Heaven. "LOOK UNTO JESUS."

## SERMON V.

### ST. PAUL IN BRITAIN.

The GOSPEL. . . which was preached to every creature which is under Heaven.—COLOSSIANS 1, *part of 23d verse.*

MARVELS which relate to worldly things, fly fast and far. Long before the magnetic telegraph had triumphed over time and space, tidings of good and ill were borne on swiftest wings.

What wonder, then, that the message of redeeming love should soon be spread abroad?

St. Paul wrote the text, about the year of our Lord, sixty-two. Even in his day, the glad tidings of salvation had been so widely proclaimed, that it might be said, with almost a literal agreement with fact, that every ear had heard.

I have a special reason for settling this position first, which soon will be clearly seen.

When our Saviour sent forth the heralds of the Cross, they were cheered by the gracious promise: "*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" St. Matt. xxviii. 20. If this pledge has been truly kept, apostolic men must now be found upon this earth, who can trace back their authority to the chosen Twelve.

It is well known that the Bishops in our church claim that their powers have been thus derived. Another fact, equally well understood, is this: that the Episcopal Church in America was planted by a ministry tracing their succession through the Scottish and English lines.

If we are really members of that church which Christ established in Judea, we must be able to connect our portion of God's kingdom with that referred to in the text, when "the GOSPEL" was preached by Apostolic men "*to every creature under heaven.*" We profess to be able to do this.

It is flippantly and sneeringly said by some, that the church in England was founded by Henry the Eighth, during the sixteenth century, when several protestant denominations sprang up on the Continent.

This we deny. The church in England, the church from which we derive our own authority to minister and teach, was planted there centuries before—yea, *five hundred years* before the first missionary of the Papal church set foot upon those shores. We saw, from the text, that within a very few years after our Lord's ascension, "the Gospel of the kingdom" had been carried to every land.

The point of interest to us just now is to find out, if we can, *when* the church was planted in Britain, and *by whom*.

In the year of our Lord 596, when Pope Gregory the Great sent Augustine, with forty monks, to bring

England under the authority of Rome, a church, complete in all its parts, was found existing there. Doctrines, discipline, worship, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons—all arranged aright, and all showing that, at some earlier day, a branch from the mother church at Jerusalem had been carried to this far-off island in the shadowy West.

Who had planted this vine? It must have happened *very long* before, for TERTULLIAN says: "Some countries of the Britons, which proved inaccessible to the Romans, are subject to Christ."\* And again, the golden-mouthed CHRYSOSTOM, who wrote one of the collects in our Prayer Book, declares: "The British Islands, situated beyond our sea, and lying in the very ocean, have felt the power of the Word; for even there churches are built, and altars erected."†

We have good reason for believing this to have happened in *Apostolic* times, since Gildas, a Briton born, and Abbot of Bangor, writes: "In the meanwhile (*i. e.* between the birth of Christ and the defeat of Boadicea), CHRIST, that true SUN, granted, for the first time, His rays (that is, His precepts) to this cold frozen Island, situated at so great a distance from the visible Sun."‡

We think we have full warrant for claiming that this vine was planted by *Apostolic men*, because EUSEBIUS asserts, that "some of the *Apostles* preached the

\* Adv. Judæ. c. 7.

† Tom. vi. p. 635, Ed. Savil.

‡ Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. ii. c. 3.

Christian doctrine in the most distant countries, and that they sailed over the ocean to those Islands which are called British.”\*

We believe that we are justified in saying that it was *St. Paul* himself who then organized the church, for CLEMENS ROMANUS affirms that this Apostle traveled “to the utmost bounds of the West,” an expression often used to describe the British Isles.† ST. JEROME declares, that St. Paul, having been in Spain, “sailed from one ocean to another, and that the progress of his preaching reached as far as the extremity of the earth.”‡ And again, that “he preached the Gospel in the *Western* parts,” a term applied to Britain.§

More definitely still, THEODORET remarks: “Our fishermen and publicans, *and he who was a tent-maker* (plainly, Paul); carried the Evangelical precepts to all nations, not only to those who lived under the Roman jurisdiction, but also to the Scythians and the Huns; besides, to the Indians, *Britons*, and Germans: and thus universally they persuaded every race and nation of men to receive the precepts of HIM who was crucified.”|| But even without these proofs we could make good our case. That there was a church in Britain long before Augustine came, bearing the standard of papal Rome, is clear, because three Bishops from Brit-

\* Eus. Evan. Demon. lib. iii. ca. 7.

† Ep. ad Corinth. ix. 4.

‡ Scrip. Ecc. in Paul.

‡ In Amos, c. 5.

|| Theod. lib. ix.

ain sat in the council of Arles, in Gaul, A. D. 314. Bishops from the same church took part in the Council at Sardica, A. D. 347, and at Ariminum, A. D. 359—all long before Augustine's day.

Linus, the first Bishop of Rome after the Apostles, was himself a Briton; so that Rome is in fact indebted to Britain, and not Britain to Rome.

As the shrewd Blackstone expresses it in his Commentaries—that great text-book of law—(b. 4. c. 8), “The ancient British Church, by whomsoever planted, was a stranger to the Bishop of Rome and his pretended authority.”

Helena, the mother of Constantine, was a Christian, and born in Britain. Many holy martyrs for the faith suffered in Britain during the Dioclesian persecution. Nay, “Augustine and his companions were indebted for their first night's lodging to the piety and well-known reputation of the good Lithardus, the Christian Bishop who accompanied Queen Bertha, wife of Ethelbert, from France, and who, for years before the time of Augustine, had daily preached and administered the Holy Eucharist in the Church of St. Martin's, near the royal city of Canterbury.”\*

What becomes of the figment, then, that these devoted monks landed upon a savage shore, and founded anew a Christian church?

\* Odenheimer on the *Origin of the Prayer Book*, p. 67. The writer here acknowledges his obligations to this admirable little work for many of the authorities quoted in this Sermon.

About the middle of the fifth century, the pagan Saxons invaded England, and gradually succeeded in driving the Britons, from the southeastern and central parts of the Island, to the mountainous districts of the west and north.

Augustine found matters in this state. The Bishop of Rome was then putting forth every effort to spread his power throughout the world. Augustine, his agent, began at once to try to unite the infant English establishment, founded by himself, with the ancient British church, which had always been there since Apostolic days.

He held a conference with the clergy of the British church at a place on the borders of Herefordshire, called "Augustine's Oak." No terms of union were agreed on, and the assembly broke up. Again they met. Augustine wished them to adopt various Roman forms, and join with his band of missionaries in converting the unbelieving Saxons.

Dinoth of Bangor answered the Italian monk, and right bravely did he speak. He was ready, he said, to pay that respect and honor to the Bishop of Rome which was due to other Bishops of the church, who all had equal rights; but that he would not recognize those *usurped* powers which Augustine strove to press.

The struggle went on. It was a contest of the rich and powerful against the poor and weak. At last the British church was obliged to yield, and Augustine

had his way. Roman usages were brought in. The Pope of Rome was reluctantly obeyed.

But was no further effort made to throw off the oppressor's yoke? Indeed there was. The faithful son of the old British church were heard protesting against the tyranny of Rome from that time until the days of the eighth Henry, when, gathering up all their strength, they drove out the intruders from the land, and swept clean of superstitious rites the temple of the Lord.

Was this removal of cobwebs and dust from the church which had stood there since the days of Paul making *a new church*? The one who asserts this had better read history again.

"The church remained the same after it was reformed as it was before, just as a man remains the same man after he has washed his face as he was before; just as Naaman, the leper, remained the same Naaman, after he was cured of his leprosy, as he was before."

The whole body of Christian people in the British Isles by one mighty effort were enabled to regain their ancient rights. It was not until twelve years after Elizabeth began to reign, that the pope persuaded his adherents throughout the land to set up an opposition to the church in Britain, which, in the days of Cranmer, had declared herself reformed and free.

The English Romanists then broke off from the ancient stock, and upon them the sin of separation rests



But so anxious was the pope to keep his usurped power, that he offered to sanction the use of the Prayer Book in the English tongue.\* Failing in this, an effort was made to invalidate the orders of the British clergy by an absurd story in regard to Archbishop Parker's consecration; but Lingard, their best historian, has acknowledged the falsehood of this charge. It is readily granted that King Henry, who first gave the death-blow to papal power, was a miserably wicked man; perhaps few worse have lived.

But we are to look at the merits of the *work*, and not to that of the *agents*.

Are our Republican institutions the less sound and good, because the writings of Paine, the infidel, rendered the most essential service in starting the great enterprise, and because profane and licentious men fought our battles, and helped to secure our freedom? Certainly not.

The work of the Reformation was of GOD, be the instruments who and what they may.

The church founded in Britain by Apostolic men was restored to her ancient rights. It is this church which has brought down to us the blessed Gospel, with all its promises and hopes.

Let us remember with gratitude the glorious company of the Apostles, to whom the Saviour first made

\* Strype's Ann. i. 340; Burnet's Hist. ii. 645, etc.; Collier, vi. 308, 309.

known His will, and the noble army of Martyrs, who shed their blood in testimony of the truth.

We have the blessings of the Gospel for *ourselves*. Are we doing our part toward spreading the knowledge of the Lord throughout the world? The claims of Missions—Diocesan, Domestic, Foreign—are resting upon us all.

A clergyman who was too much disposed to confine his labors close at home, once asked the Duke of Wellington what he thought of the obligation of supporting *Foreign* Missions. The blunt old soldier answered: "Look to your marching orders, sir! '*Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature!*'"

Christians, are you mindful of this duty? If you cannot buckle on the armor of the heralds of the Cross, you can help to furnish the means to support them in this work.

## SERMON VI.

### BACKSLIDING.

When the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord : therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion.—1 KINGS xiii. 26.

I MUST needs tell the whole story connected with the text, in order to make the matter plain. Although almost every body has a Bible now, it is a book so little read by many who possess it, that I am afraid that it will be a new story to some.

The *practical* part of the sermon may be the shorter ; but we cannot well mistake the lesson which it is important should be learned.

Jeroboam was a young man of spirit, and of decided military tastes. The germ of a Napoleon was implanted in his soul. Solomon, being attracted by his striking appearance and martial bearing, appointed him captain of the host.

The King of Israel, in his dotage, lost, in a great degree, his well-deserved reputation for wisdom ; and, among other gross sins, was guilty of idolatry. This last circumstance, as you will see, made Jeroboam a

much more conspicuous personage than he might otherwise have been.

One day, as the young soldier was walking out by himself, a prophet met him, and seizing hold of a new garment which he had on, tore it into twelve pieces. This might have seemed very unpardonable rudeness, had not the man of God gone on to explain that by this symbolical action he meant to show that the kingdom should soon be divided into twelve parts. He then gave Jeroboam *ten* pieces of the cloth, signifying thereby that this number of tribes would acknowledge him as their king, while only *two* would be left to the son of Solomon. Even this degree of forbearance was to be shown, not for any favor toward Solomon, but for faithful David's sake.

As you may well imagine, the old king was angry enough when he heard of this, and became very jealous of the young man, to whom he had hitherto been devotedly attached. Indeed, he tried to kill Jeroboam; supposing, in his folly, that such an act on his part could bring to nought the unchanging plans of God.

The youth fled to Egypt, and there remained in obscurity until Solomon's death. Rehoboam took his father's place upon the throne, but there were great complaints among the people; and, in the midst of the excitement and confusion, the exile hastened back from the land of the Pyramids, and ten out of the twelve tribes proclaimed him king, according to the prophet's words.

The rebels (as they were most likely to be called) separated from their brethren, and went and set up a government for themselves.

One would have thought that having been thus signally prospered, Jeroboam would show some gratitude to God, and do what he could to please him. Instead of this, he seems to have had but one object in view—the advancement of his own glory.

There was a difficulty, however, which greatly troubled him. At certain seasons of the year, all the Jews were obliged to go up to the temple at Jerusalem, that there, in God's own house, they might unite with his chosen priests, in celebrating the holy festivals. Jeroboam dreaded lest these repeated visits to the ancient capital might wean the hearts of the people from himself, and thus weaken his authority.

In sore perplexity, he determined to do what no man has a right even to *attempt*, to make a religion for himself, and to appoint ministers to serve his own selfish ends. An altar was accordingly set up at Bethel, and Jeroboam stood by it to officiate as chief priest, (thus imitating the practice of Pagan nations), while the people looked on in solemn silence.

But what means that man in the rough garment, who runs thus hastily through the crowd, and boldly confronts the besotted king, in his sacrilegious work?

It is a prophet of God. Looking up at the heap of hewn stones, upon which the flame of sacrifice had been already kindled, he cried, and said: "O altar,

altar! thus saith the Lord: Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. And as a sign that my words are true, behold the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon thee shall be poured out."

Jeroboam was highly indignant at this unexpected interruption, and lifted his hand as a signal to the multitude to seize the offending prophet. He would have done much better to have confessed his sin, even though it mortified his pride. The arm thus rashly raised dropped lifeless by his side.

Thank God, Jeroboam, that He did not strike thee dead! The withering of thy arm was an act of mercy, to save thee from still greater evil.

When, instead of cutting short our days, our heavenly Father shows interest enough in our welfare to punish us in some milder way, such as sickness, or poverty, or the loss of a limb, we ought not to murmur, but rather acknowledge at once that we have been doing wrong, and set about correcting it.

Jeroboam now knew full well whose messenger the rough prophet is. But here his extreme selfishness again appears. He is not at all sorry for his grievous sin, in having tried to set up a church of his own in opposition to the church of God, but is distressed at the sight of his withered arm.

His personal appearance was injured thereby, and

he could no longer, as a warrior, wield his sword. He therefore begs the prophet, with apparent earnestness, to ask God to remove his curse.

The prayer was answered; but Jeroboam, instead of being grateful to the Almighty, wishes to get rid of his trifling sense of obligation, by a small sacrifice; and accordingly he invites the prophet to go home and dine at his house, and receive a reward.

How easily people imagine they can pay off God's ministers for the benefit which they bring!

The man of God declined the proposal upon the ground that he had been strictly commanded not to tarry at all among these idolatrous people, but to hasten back another way from that by which he came.

Now we have reached a melancholy part of the story. Thus far, the prophet had acted with a holy boldness, which well became the important office which had been entrusted to him.

On the road to Jerusalem, being weary, perhaps, with the labor and excitement of the day, he sat down under a broad and branching oak, and was wrapped up in his own reflections, (some of them very pleasing to his self-esteem), when he was drawn into a difficulty for which he was not at all prepared. An old *false* prophet, (there are always such persons in the world), had been told by his sons of the strange things which had taken place that day at Bethel; and the father's curiosity became so much excited, that he

asks which way the true prophet had gone, and starts, with all haste, in pursuit.

Finding him seated quietly in the shade, in the manner before described, he introduced himself as another prophet, and insists upon his returning to his house, to take some refreshment. The true prophet *ought* to have said *No*, and speeded on his way. But the devil had now made sure of his victim. So the true prophet very foolishly yielded to temptation, and was soon comfortably reclining at the false prophet's table.

He must have felt some upbraidings of conscience, even while he ate and drank; but he could not have conceived of half the dangers which he ran, in thus foolishly disobeying God.

In the midst of the feast, the old false prophet rose up, and said with great solemnity, no doubt, because he was declaring what God had told him: "Thus saith the Lord: Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept his commandment, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drank water in the place of which the Lord did say to thee: Eat no bread and drink no water: thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers."

The true prophet must have been thunder-struck, when he heard these terrible words. It is not likely that he sat any longer at the table, although he



could have had but little idea what the fearful threatening meant.

If these men had been wise, something might have even then been done to turn aside the coming vengeance. Had the old false prophet, who, for once, had spoken truth, kneeled down, side by side, with the true prophet, who had been thus unhappily betrayed into sin, and both had earnestly besought God's pardon, the conclusion of the story might have been different. We know how merciful God is.

Instead of this, however, the true prophet mounted his beast and rode off in haste. But, alas! he was only rushing onward to destruction.

A lion sprang out of the thicket and killed him; and then, to show that it was a Divine judgment, the fierce creature did not devour his prey, but kept guard over the body, till the old false prophet, learning what had happened, hurried to the spot. He recognized in the mangled and bleeding corpse, the unfaithful man of God who had so lately shared his hospitality, and buried his dishonored remains, with mourning, in his own tomb.

And then, as to the perverse Jeroboam, we read that he "returned not from his evil way, but made again, of the lowest of the people, priests of the high place. . . . And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth."

The great lesson to be learned from all this is, *the*

*danger of falling away into sin, after having once been servants of God.* There was very much to admire in the character of the prophet who came to such a deplorable end. But, in one short hour, what a change came over him!

From being bold and obedient, he became vacillating and rebellious. From being high in the favor of God, he became the object of contempt, and was blasted by the breath of his displeasure.

*He was a backslider! Are you a backslider?*

Such persons do not realize what these words imply. They mean that those who have actually set out in the road to Heaven, and accomplished part of the journey, are sliding back into the ways of sin, becoming careless about their prayers, and reading the Bible, and attendance at church and alms deeds; entering with renewed relish upon wicked practices which once they had resolution enough to forsake.

Some slight temptation is the secret of this falling away, a temptation, perhaps, no greater than when the true prophet accepted the invitation of the old false one, to eat bread at his house. But such trifling temptations are oftentimes the most dangerous we can have.

It may seem a small matter to go to bed at night without kneeling down to pray, or to stay away for a few Sundays from church, or to eat or drink too much for the sake of appearing sociable and good-humored, or to tell a "white lie," as some choose to

call it, or to dress in finery which we cannot afford, or to do many other things of this sort ; but these, or even *one* of them, may be the direct cause of our becoming backsliders.

It might seem almost unnecessary in a book like the Bible—God's own word to man—a record describing such great events as the Creation and the Deluge—to fill so many pages with the story just recited, as to occupy most of a sermon, as I have done, in telling it ; but certainly, if unreclaimed backsliders must go hereafter where we are assured they do, the time has been well employed in warning them.

Oh, let no one ever venture to say, in a trifling way, (if such be your unfortunate state,) "I have fallen from grace—I was once a professing Christian, but now am nothing!"

Rather kneel humbly on your knees, and beg God with all your heart, that he will mercifully "heal your backslidings," and receive you again to his favor.

It is too dreadful a thing to think of, to be living in the condition of backsliders.

Remember the prophet who was slain by the lion ! And there is another lion, more fierce and blood-thirsty—the devil—who will seize upon backsliders, and carry them away to his den.

May the Son of God, who came to "destroy the works of the devil," save us from him !

## SERMON VII.

### THE LACK OF CLERGYMEN, AND THE REMEDY.

The Lord gave the word; great was the company of the preachers. Kings, with their armies, did flee, and were discomfited, and they of the household divided the spoil.—PSALM lxxviii. 11th and 12th verses.

THUS graphically does the Royal poet portray the triumphs of Israel over the hosts of the proud and the mighty.

His language, however, has a still wider application. Not only are we to understand it as referring to that glorious day, when, by God's command, proclamation was made for his poor oppressed people to assemble themselves, and march in triumph out of Egypt, and when their numerous adversaries fled at their approach, but also to the still more wonderful victories, under the Christian dispensation, which have been gained by the preaching of the Cross.

But it is not of *conquests* that we are now to speak. It is the less pleasing task of pointing out the secret why the triumphs of the church, in these days, are comparatively so few, and to press home the *necessity* and the *obligation* of doing something in this behalf.

God has given commandment, that the ministers of

his word shall be sent forth into all lands to prepare the nations for the final judgment, which is hastening on apace. The church has obeyed this direction to some extent; but still, from every quarter of the globe, is heard the Macedonian cry, from those sunk in ignorance and sin, saying to such as have the light of life, "Come over and help us!"

There never was a time when the call for faithful clergymen was so loud and urgent. The population of the world increases day by day. We are told that, within half a century, the arts of civilization, so favorable to life, have doubled the inhabitants of England. And can any one doubt that our own land is filling up with amazing rapidity? Can any one deny that the spiritual wants of this great multitude are but poorly provided for?

It is a most alarming fact, my friends, that just at this time, when the ministers of God are most needed, there is an annual decrease in the ratio of ministerial supply. This is by no means confined to our own church. All denominations are complaining of the same sad state of things. And is there no *remedy* for this? There *must* be; and then the question comes, What is it? Somebody will very likely answer, that we ought to *pray*.

Yes, so we should, for thus our Lord has said: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He

will send forth laborers into His harvest." St. Matt. ix. 37, 38.

But this is not enough. We can do much more than this to supply the alarming deficiency in the ranks of the clergy. Let us see.

There are three classes of persons from which the church may rightfully claim a succession of recruits for the work of the ministry. And first, after the example of her Divine Lord, she may call upon *men of years and experience*, in other walks of life, to forsake the seat of commerce, and the paths of the learned professions, and buckle on the armor of Christ's valiant soldiers.

Next, she may appeal to *young men* who have just completed their academic course, and who are as yet uncommitted to any particular business or profession, to consecrate their best gifts to God's service.

The *third* class, and that from which the Christian ministry should naturally receive the largest number of recruits, is that composed of *boys who have been trained up to be clergymen*.

It is the imperative duty of every parish priest to do all within his power to turn the minds of these three classes of persons to the holy office to which his own life has been devoted; that, when he shall be summoned hence by death, there may be others left to take up the standard of the Cross, and press onward in the fight.

We appeal to parents, in God's name, and ask them

to devote their sons to this high and noble work. High and noble indeed it is! Sinful men made ambassadors for Christ; clothed with power from God to preach and baptize; chosen as the guides and governors of His people; and standing at the door of His kingdom, to welcome home the returning penitent.

No human being, be his calling or office what it may, has any thing like the influence and power wielded by the humblest minister of God.

Parents, you are ambitious for your sons. Here, then, is a field in which your highest aspirations for their advancement can be more than realized. Resolve to devote at least one son to the ministry. Do you say that it is your earnest desire, but that you must wait and see what the tastes and dispositions of the child will be? You need not. His tastes and dispositions will be formed and fashioned, in a great degree, by the course of training which you yourselves pursue. Should you allow him to mix with bad boys, and acquire evil habits and desires—if, when a child, he chews, and smokes, and drinks, and swears, and plays cards, as a matter of course, these habits will grow with his growth, and strengthen with his strength—and you need not expect him to become a clergyman.

On the other hand, if you are really anxious to see your son a chosen servant of Christ, to minister at the altar, frankly converse with your pastor upon the subject, and be guided by his direction and advice.

We have high authority from the sacred Scriptures that the counsel thus offered is safe and right. I beg that parents will read and ponder over the histories of Samuel and Timothy, which have been written for their learning, and see if they have no encouragement to follow examples so bright and beautiful.

I entreat them to make it the subject of especial prayer, that God will help them thus to train their sons aright. Let father and mother, on bended knee, say again and again, in the privacy of secret devotion, when the soul wrestles earnestly, and with a perseverance which is discouraged by no delay: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that the desire of my heart is to see this son laboring to save the souls of his fellow-men. I ask not the great things of the world for him, but would rather behold him in the humblest station in the ministry, called thereto and blessed of Thee, than wearing the proudest trophies of earthly distinction. Take him, O God, for that service: change his heart; inspire him with desire for the work; qualify him for it; let him be the honored instrument of winning many souls to Christ—and then my dearest wish for him will be gratified."

If you have *faith* in the promises of God, you cannot doubt, my friends, that such a request will be graciously answered.

You may, if you choose, educate your child according to the maxims of the world, and perhaps live long enough to see him a successful lawyer, or a skillful



physician, or a thriving merchant, or a shrewd politician; but how much greater your satisfaction, when your eyes are looking out for the last time upon earthly scenes, if you can have the indescribable happiness of beholding your son a good and faithful minister of God, earning for himself, by his work of faith and labor of love, the respect and affection of hundreds and thousands of his fellow-men, and certain of a glittering crown and imperishable delights in the Paradise of the blessed!

But, allowing that the appeal which has just been made to parents should produce the desired result, some years must necessarily be passed before these boys can grow up, and be prepared for the sacred office. Meanwhile, multitudes are perishing for lack of knowledge, and are going down to the grave untaught and unblessed. What ought we to do in such an emergency as this?

I call upon young men, who have hitherto been engaged in other walks of life, to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

If the salvation of *one* immortal soul be of more worth than all the wealth of the world, is it not something to be thought of, as a reasonable proposal, that you should assume the vast responsibilities of that office which will authorize you to act as the guides of the blind, the comforters of the sorrowful, and the ambassadors from God to men?

Your education may be wholly inadequate to

qualify you to edit a Hebrew Bible, or to translate the Prayer Book into Chinese, but the church needs workmen of every grade. She already has her learned champions to do battle with the subtle wisdom of the world; she has her eloquent divines, to charm the ears of the fastidious and refined; she has her polished and winning messengers to send forth where such agencies are required; but, most of all, she lacks just now a rough-and-ready clergy, to go out into the highways and neglected regions of the earth, to "warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak."

Young men, think of the shortness of life! Think of the nearness of the Judgment, and then settle it with yourselves whether you are consulting your real interest and happiness most by spending your days in the pursuit of worldly things, or in taking up the Cross of Christ, and in pressing onward, through difficulties and toils, to certain triumphs on earth, and to everlasting glory in heaven.

How many wealthy persons there are who, having no sons of their own, could easily furnish the means for educating some poor boy for the ministry. Who will do this?

Those who wish to be living and doing good upon the earth after death, will think of what I say. Oh, that all who *can* would be ready to aid in this blessed work! Then would the pressing wants of the church be soon supplied. Then, according to the glowing

language of the text, the triumphs of the Gospel would be widely spread. "The Lord will give the word. Great will be the company of the preachers. Kings with their armies—even Satan, with his angels and all his mighty host, will flee and be discomfited, and they of the household of faith shall take the spoils"—precious souls, rescued from ignorance, and error, and sin; and faithful ministers of God, who have turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars forever and ever!

## SERMON VIII.

### SIN OF SELFISHNESS.

None of us liveth to himself.—ROMANS xiv., *part of 7th verse.*

IT was a saying of Plato, a heathen philosopher whom Christians might many times listen to with profit, "I was not born for myself alone: my country claims a part, my relations claim a part, and my friends claim a part in me."

Worldly policy, on the other hand, claims for its motto that hateful proverb, "Every man for himself, and God for us all."

*Self* is the first and ruling object with the unrenewed heart. This narrow, contracted spirit is manifested in early childhood. The tiny hand which is stretched out with greediness to seize the biggest apple and the most tempting cake, will, when nerved with greater strength, be grasping more and more.

Selfishness is a fault which injures and degrades the soul. It lessens a man in the estimation of every one about him; and, if a verdict could be pronounced by his conscience, without bias or control, it makes one think less even of himself. To deny ourselves for the good of others, to love those whom we are

bound to love with a pure and unselfish affection, to labor for our country's good with a true and disinterested heart—this is the true secret of unity and happiness in families and neighborhoods, and of peace and prosperity in the State.

The sympathy of kind and considerate hearts is all that renders life endurable. Take away this element of comfort, and what a burden it becomes.

To rejoice with them that do rejoice and to weep with them that weep, is a most important rule of the Christian code. The philosophy of ancient Greece abounds in the marvels which sympathy, regarded as a miraculous, wonder-working power, could do. It was said "that two harps being tuned alike, and one being played, the chords of the other would follow the tune with a faint, sympathetic music. It was believed that precious stones had sympathies with peculiar persons and characters. Nay, even the influence of the stars shed their virtue upon men by sympathy."

Curious as such speculations are, I shall not pursue them here. My object is simply to bring before you that active sympathy which enables us to enter into and to share the emotions of a fellow-being—be those emotions glad or gloomy—and which leads us to rejoice or suffer with him.

Sympathy is a faculty which belongs to our spiritual nature. Outward circumstances may, indeed, influence and move it; but, for the most part, we have it under complete control. Indeed, sympathy may be

buried so deep under the weight of cold and repulsive selfishness, that no sign of its existence will be shown, although misfortune and misery present themselves in their most threadbare and wretched garb.

The heart becomes as hard as a stone. The fountain of tears is dried up. The man is changed to a beast.

"NONE OF US LIVETH TO HIMSELF." In these few words, St. Paul lays down the main feature which distinguishes true and consistent Christians from the selfish world, and from those who, by following a worldly policy, bring discredit on the Christian name. So long as we can consent to live for ourselves alone, the root of the matter is not in us.

Christians claim to be disciples of that Saviour who laid aside the power and glory which belonged to Him, as God's own Son, in heaven, and spent a life of self-denial upon the earth, to rescue us from wretchedness and woe. "He died for all," writes the Apostle, "that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him," who suffered so much in our behalf. And our Saviour himself has said: "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me."

Blind and presumptuous, then, are those who, while claiming to bear this cross, neither feel its weight, nor suffer its reproach. In what trumpet tones does the prophet speak, when he utters the solemn warning, "Wo to them that are at ease in Zion!" Alas! how sadly, in these selfish days, are we falling behind in walking in the steps of Christ.

In earlier times, Christians were sons of consolation, because they fulfilled, in part, their Master's office by gracious ministrations to the poor and sick.

While the very name of *hospital* was unknown in heathen tongues, the world was blessed by these abodes for wretchedness and want as fast and so far as Christian truth prevailed.

But it is not of generalities that I would speak. The fault of selfishness must be brought nearer home, if we are ever to know its guilt.

I will sketch, in rough outline, three pictures from daily life; in which each one, as it suits him best, can arrange the coloring and the tint. They are not portraits, mind you, of monsters in wickedness and crime, but of those who, in particulars not a few, are followers of Christ. Selfishness is their besetting sin.

Take first what may be called *the polished literary man*. His mind is cultivated with uncommon care. His taste is exquisite and refined. All departments of the world of letters have been more or less explored. The embracing of Christianity has cost him nothing. So far from this, the priceless treasures of Christianity have added to his stores.

Now, there is certainly nothing to find fault with here. But the truth is, the cultivation of such tastes and habits cause dangers to spring up which did not exist before. Ordinary society becomes irksome. Any other than a literary atmosphere is hard to breathe. Sympathy with sorrow and suffering, especially when

found among stupid ignorance and squalid poverty, soon begins to deaden and decay. The circle in which such a person lives is becoming less and less. Selfishness is preying upon the heart.

Christian, behold the smile of benevolence and love which beams in the countenance of your Lord, and learn to live for others, although their minds and manners may be rough, and not at all in accordance with your taste.

If the selfishness which refinement, unsanctified, begets could be cured in no easier way, the remembrance how soon its cherished idols will be scattered to the winds must show its folly, even though we discover not its sin.

See all the choicest books in which the literary man has so carefully placed his name, and marked his favorite passages, spread out before the world, and the auctioneer handing them over to the highest bidder!

How thoughts like these will open our eyes, and make us more ready to look abroad for opportunities of doing good, and of leaving some unselfish mark upon the times in which we live!

As another portrait in our series, I place *the covetous man*. Very likely he knows not that this grievous fault can be laid to his charge. So many are trudging along the same dusty road, that he does not realize that he is going wrong.

He has set his heart upon becoming rich. No sin thus far. Riches may be fairly gained, and most use-



fully employed. The danger is in the principles and habits which they so often help to form. Self is thought of in every hope and plan. The tender sympathy which once could readily be reached by sights and sounds of woe, is blunted or destroyed. To scrape, and save, and sacrifice comfort, and shut out the appeals of mercy—this is now the rule.

Suppose that these efforts are successful. Does not selfishness pay dearly for its gains? The man's nature is wholly changed. He can no longer lift his thoughts above this earth. His very countenance has acquired a mean, money-loving expression, and his voice is fawning in its tone. Habits have become too fixed to be changed at will. Selfishness has grown to be a second nature.

The *disposition* to give has not enlarged with the *ability* to do so. The man may profess to be a Christian, but no sacrifice will he make to prove himself sincere. He would cheerfully expend a good round sum for a piece of showy furniture for his house, or feast, for ostentatious display; but when called upon to pay his fair proportion for the spread of the Gospel, he would imagine himself to be quite poor.

The Bible teaches that true Christians do not live for themselves. What then can the end of that person be, who thus passes his days without caring for the wants of the poor, or the claims of the church of God?

I have one picture more. It is a delicate subject—

*the selfishness which mothers of families—Christians beyond all doubt—are liable to contract.*

There is so much to respect and love in the class which I am about to describe, that it is an ungrateful task to draw attention to faults. They are keepers at home: active, prudent, and industrious; kind, gentle, and devout, never meddling with what does not concern them; and caring far more for the comfort and welfare of their households than for their own.

This is all most commendable and right. But suppose that *every* Christian should do this much, and no more. If no one is willing to go beyond her own family circle, who is to attend to the sick? who will console the sorrowful? who is to care for the poor? who is to instruct the ignorant? who is to wait upon the dying?

There must be *some* unselfish persons to be found, or all this work will be left undone.

Now, who, besides those actually hindered by physical inability, ought to consider themselves as excused from taking their share in such duties?

Indolence suggests that it is very fatiguing. I grant it. Selfishness argues that there is more than enough to do at home. Very likely.

Morbid delicacy objects that it will be trying and disagreeable. No doubt of it.

False pride whispers that it would be out of character and unbecoming, and that one will be obliged to descend from her dignified rank. Perhaps so.

Christians, followers of that Saviour "who went about doing good," "who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor," can you thus venture to drug your consciences, and neglect your duty, and offend your God—and all in obedience to selfishness?

If we never do more than we find it perfectly convenient, agreeable, or easy, we shall never accomplish much. What cross do you carry? What sacrifices do you make? What difficulties do you overcome? What charities do you perform? What scenes of desolation do you cheer? Whose tears do you dry? When have you ever done or given so much to the cause of charity or the church, as to make you feel that you had denied yourself some personal convenience or gratification, in order to please God?

It is not the whole of religion, by any means, to worship God in fine temples, and discharge our duties at home.

Mind not what standard the easy, shiftless world may set in matters of this kind.

I would give little for the hopes of Christians who are not living unselfish lives, and who, by good works performed on earth, are not laying up treasure in heaven; who cannot say with holy Paul, when speaking of the whole body of God's believing people, "NONE OF US LIVETH TO HIMSELF!"

## SERMON IX.

### LOSS AND GAIN.

What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?—  
ST. MATTHEW xvi. 26.

A PLAIN, blunt question this. Prudent people are wont to look into the profit and loss of every business transaction in which they propose to engage.

Our Saviour invites them to show the same discretion in concerns of greater moment. He would have each one ask himself, while risking his immortal soul for the sake of the perishing body, Am I making a good bargain? Although formed from the dust, and doomed to return to it again, we have that within us which unites us unto God. The body is merely the servant of the spirit. It is altogether unlike and inferior to it.

The body, which now clogs and inthralls the spirit, shall be soon dissolved, and return to its kindred dust. But when the heavens have departed as a scroll, and the earth and all things therein have been burned up, when the sun and moon have withdrawn their shining, and the stars stand still in their courses, the soul will remain fresh and vigorous. Let untold myriads

of years be past, and its existence will then be no nearer its ending than before. Is it not worth while to render so long a life happy?

The value of the soul may also be seen from considering the *price* which has been paid for its redemption. It was nothing less than the blood—the precious blood!—of God's own dear Son.

Nor is this the only way in which the Almighty has shown His interest in our good. What but His knowledge of the endless life of each one of us, which must either be indescribably blessed or miserable, has led Him to send forth His ambassadors, to establish His church, to strive by His Spirit, to warn by His threatenings of wrath, and to woo by the offers of love?

But, notwithstanding these plain proofs that the soul is the only possession which should engage any large portion of our thoughts, circumstances, education, and the evil desires of the flesh, and debasing influences of various sorts, make us think less of it than of most things else.

Take an example where you please, and, unless the Holy Spirit of God has wrought a great revolution in his nature, you will find that man, even though he may talk much of a coming change, still looks to this world as the centre of all his hopes.

Hence the grievous struggle before *time* can be kept long enough out of mind to allow *eternity* to present

itself, spreading out in boundless extent, and full of the most solemn realities.

But this we *must* do, however hard and unpleasant it may be. And no one need expect to have his heart cut away from the objects upon which its affections have so long been fastened, without pain while the operation is going on, and violent throbbings long afterward.

The sinner will not bring himself to believe that his present happiness must be short, until God has taught him that the soul's best portion is in another world. Those about him may suffer loss, and be robbed by death of kindred near and dear, and still he will deceive himself, and neglect to provide for his eternal welfare.

Does not this description remind you of some whom you know full well? Nay, is it not the image of your own selves, reflected in the mirror of truth?

"What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Here our Saviour proposes a most favorable case. The man who is represented as bartering his soul for some temporal convenience or pleasure, makes the best of his bargain. He is said to "*gain the whole world.*"

But what individual ever did this? Alexander the Great came as near as any one to the extreme limit of earthly ambition. But look at the map

of the world; and, after setting his mark upon every country conquered by his arms, see how very inconsiderable a part of the globe it was!

Besides, every province which he wrested from another's sway, was so much loss to that rival of his greatness, and a daily demonstration of the uncertainty of Fortune, and of the fickleness with which she bestows her favors.

Allowing, for a moment, if you will, that *some* might gain "the *whole* world," is there such unalloyed happiness in its possession, that the successful victor would be recompensed for the loss of his soul?

Whatever enjoyment the discontented or romantic may promise to themselves in things at a distance, yet there is, in fact, no more miserable condition in the world than to be at the top of greatness, and to feel that there is nothing more left to aspire after. None of you are mad enough to suppose, (although ready and anxious to barter the soul for the best price it will bring), that "the *whole* world," or even any considerable part of it, will be given you in exchange. There are too many souls in the market, to leave very large shares of richness, or greatness, or glory, to be paid for each.

The devil, who tempts people to make these foolish bargains, is very apt to *offer more*. He has no hesitation in saying to any and to every one, who will listen to his smooth and persuasive words: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and

worship me." All this pleasure which you long after, shall certainly be yours, if you will give me your soul!

Those who accept his terms, forget that they are listening to the "*father of lies*." They forget that this is God's world. They forget that the false and flattering tradesman who thus offers them, at wholesale, the good things of life, has no more right to make the proposal, than to set a price upon one of the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, or a jewel snatched from an archangel's crown.

So short-sighted and foolish is man! I once read of a woman whose house was on fire. She was very active in removing her goods, but forgot her child, who was asleep in the cradle. At last she thought of the poor babe, and ran, with earnest desire, to save it. But it was now too late; the flames prevented her from crossing the threshold.

Judge of the agony of mind which wrung from her the bitter exclamation: "Oh, my child! my child! I have saved my goods, but lost my child!"

So will it be with many a poor sinner, who spent all his life in the occupations of the world, while the "one thing needful" was forgotten. What will it then avail for a man to say: "I secured a good place, or a good trade, or profession, but I lost my soul? I made many friends, but God is my enemy. I heaped up riches, but now they must all be left."

And yet the world is full of those who are acting



this foolish part. It is a singular exception to a broad rule, to find one, here and there, who is not, in some way or other, risking the loss of his soul.

Look at the ambitious student, or the scheming politician, or the greedy glutton, or the grasping miser, or the child of fashion; or even the plain, plodding man of business, whose thoughts constantly vibrate between the office or shop, in which his profits are made, and the table and the bed where his body is to be fed and refreshed.

What think or care they for the endless life which the soul must lead in another state of being? What preparation or sacrifice do they make, that it may be a happy one? None! And still God's word, and ministers, and ordinance, and the chastisements which He sends, are all telling them that the future must be thought of; that one hour of penitence and prayer is worth whole years of exertion after any worldly good, that the interests of the soul *ought not* to be slighted; that the bliss of heaven is too precious to be squandered, and the misery of hell to be endured.

A lost soul! Who can tell the meaning of those words? Health may be thrown away, and the constitution shattered; but air and exercise, and the physician's skill, blessed by God's healing power, may restore them both.

Property may be lost; but industry and prudence may more than make it up to us again. Friends may

become estranged, or die, and others will rise up in their stead.

But the soul once lost, is lost *forever*. The person who suffers this irreparable misfortune has none but himself to blame. The voice of wretchedness, from the gloomy regions of despair, will repeat through long, lingering years, the remorseful but unavailing lament: "I did it; it was my own act. I bartered my soul!"

It is passing strange with what cool indifference the most solemn warnings from God are received by hardened and impenitent sinners. They do not manifest as much concern about it, as they would in a paragraph in a newspaper, or the floating gossip of the street.

The occupations of Monday drive away the sober thoughts which the duties of the Lord's day may have excited. While the services are going on, they sometimes seem interested. The sermon may strike them as being truthful, and as suggesting topics worthy of regard.

While the concluding prayer is offered, they will, perhaps, bow their stubborn necks, and resolve that the week just entered upon, shall be well and wisely spent. They may even have some serious though indefinite intention of uniting with the church. Like a poor, shipwrecked one, buffeting with the waves, and stretching out his hands with confidence toward a floating board or beam, they may fancy themselves

almost safe within the Ark, when the sweeping, all-engrossing cares of life come rushing back, and bear them far away.

There are those who are foolish enough to suppose that they can be joined to God by the mere exercise of their thoughts. But what saith the Scripture? "*As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.*" "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of God, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*"

Until the ordinances appointed by our blessed Saviour have been reverently received, we have not entered into covenant with God. Should you willfully refuse to embrace the privileges so freely offered to you, and die in this condition, the largest stretch of charity could offer no ray of hope.

You might as well expect to claim insurance for the loss of a house, because you *intended* to take out a policy, as to look for the mercy of God, when you stubbornly neglected his reasonable requirements.

In endeavoring to protect your property from danger by fire and flood, you would go to the authorized agents. So God's ministers are to be consulted in reference to the well-being of the soul.

I do not mean, of course, that sacraments, or ministers, or any thing, can stand between the sinner and his Saviour; but these instrumentalities are appointed by God, and they are not to be undervalued nor despised.

Why delay longer to seek and find the mercy and

grace of God? Most of you are skillful in calculating loss and gain when worldly considerations are concerned. Solve this problem, then, and let the answer prompt you how to act: "*What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*"

## SERMON X.

### TRUSTFULNESS.

Though I am sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in THEE.—  
PSALM lvi. 3.

WHO does not envy the trustfulness of a little child, clinging fast to a father's hand, when threatening dangers thicken about the way, and saying to himself, no matter how terrible the storm: "My father is with me, and I am safe!"

Such is the unfailing confidence which all true believers have in the power and goodness of their FATHER in Heaven. Of course, with depression of spirits, or times of weakness and sickness, or when overtaken by unlooked-for misfortunes, there may be slight waverings, and even a momentary forgetfulness that they have such a tower of strength on which they may securely rest; but soon the season of despondency will be past; and while looking up with the smile of hope and love, to that great and gracious Being, who is about our bed and path, and who watches over all our ways, the full and grateful heart will find utterance in the confiding language of the text: "Though I am sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in THEE."

The Bible abounds in precious promises, setting forth the reasonableness of such confidence. "Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust." Psalm xl. 4. "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord, shall be safe." Proverbs xxix. 25. "The Lord delivereth the souls of his servants; and all they that put their trust in Him shall not be destitute." Psalm xxxiv. 22. "Put thou thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good; dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Psalm xxxvii. 3. "They that put their trust in the Lord, shall be even as the Mount Sion, which can not be removed, but standeth fast forever." Psalm cxxv. 1.

I need hardly stop to give you further proofs. Oh, how gracious are such assurances of the particular providence of God, for those who have enroled themselves among his people!

Christians lose a great source of consolation and happiness, whenever they forget the fact that the eye of their heavenly Father is always over them for good, and that his attentive ear is ever open to their prayers. Aye, they are guilty of a *wrong* by this heedlessness. It is not merely showing a want of faith in God, who is able and willing to do for them exceedingly abundantly above all that they can ask or think, but they are actually robbing themselves of comfort in their distresses, and relief from dangers, which they have only to pray for in order to secure.

I shall venture to offer some familiar illustrations of the text.

I. People are oftentimes oppressed by poverty, or perplexed with business, and now and then sadly at a loss what they had best do next.

Instead of becoming downcast and disheartened and turning sour looks upon the world, and every thing about them, they should remember that they have a Father above who can show them what to do, and who can bless them in every honest endeavor to seek and secure success.

They have only to kneel down and pray in faith, and the answer of peace will be returned.

It is God who giveth men power to get wealth. It is He who will grant even the good things of this life to such as diligently seek him.

II. Again. Every day of our lives we are exposed to accidents and death. Move about as carefully as we please, the delicate machinery which makes up this bodily fabric, may, from the slightest cause, become suddenly and seriously deranged, and our vital breath be stopped. The very superabundance of health increases our peril of death. And then, if we travel about on horseback, or in carriages, or in the swiftest conveyance which modern ingenuity has contrived, the dangers multiply, and the chances of safety become less and less.

And again. When those deep mutterings are heard in the heavens above, and the face of the sun is

darkened, and the swift lightnings shoot across the broad expanse, who does not know that one moment's time may put an end to his earthly existence?

Who has not felt alarmed in such seasons of danger, and wished, with all his heart, that he could claim the great God as his friend? Blessed, thrice blessed is the man who has made the Lord the ground of his hope, and the portion of his soul.

Let dangers come upon him in their most terrible array, the experience of Israel's king will be realized by every Christian heart: "Though I am sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in THEE!"

III. Again. Accidents not unseldom happen, which seem at first very great misfortunes, and cause us to distrust the goodness of God; but afterward light breaks in upon the darkness, and we discover that these very afflictions have been working for our good.

An instance occurs to my mind, which took place during bloody Mary's reign. The great and good Bernard Gilpin, whose self-denying and successful labors in the upper districts of England procured for him the title of "the Apostle of the North," when exposed to losses or troubles, was accustomed to say: "Ah, well, God's will be done; nothing happens that is not intended for our good: it is all for the best."

In the midst of Mary's persecutions, this good clergyman was accused of heresy; and being seized at once, and dragged away for trial, he took an affec-



tionate leave of his friends, fully expecting to die at the stake. On the way to London, he accidentally broke his leg, which, for a time, delayed the journey.

His enemies, unmoved by his patience under suffering, now took occasion to retort upon him his habitual remark. "What!" said they, "is this all for the best? You say, master, that nothing happens which is not for our good. Think you that your broken leg is so intended?"

"Sirs, I make no question but it is," was his meek reply. And so it really turned out; for before he was able to travel, Queen Mary died, the persecution ceased, and he was set at liberty.

IV. Again. The blessedness of having a sure trust in God is often experienced in the moment of extreme peril.

A ship is in the midst of a terrible storm. The rudder can no longer direct her course. The angry waves are dashing over the deck, and water is fast rising in the hold. Cries of terror and anguish are heard on every hand. There is only one step between these unhappy voyagers and death.

This is a scene from real life. When hope had given way to utter despair, many ran to a clergyman on board, and besought him to pray for deliverance.

"Oh, sir," said one, "in this awful crisis (for it seems that prejudice will stick fast to people, even in the very jaws of death) your Prayer Book can be of no service to you."

The man of God made no reply, but fell on his knees, and with a fervor that penetrated every heart, implored mercy, in the solemn words of the Litany.

"O God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

"O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

"O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

"O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners."

The effect was wonderful. Tears were in every eye, and all hearts seemed lifted up to God in prayer, that He would save them from a watery grave.

Suddenly the winds were hushed, and the billows ceased to rage. The mighty God, who rides upon the whirlwind and rules the storm, had sent forth His commandment, "Peace, be still!" The prayer of faith received its full reward.

V. Another illustration of the text may be found in the encouragement which a sure trust in God's unfailing goodness affords to His people, in the midst of anxieties about the events of the future.

"What if my house should burn down, or my health should fail?" asks one. "What if my business should prove unsuccessful?" inquires another.

And so questions, most perplexing and important will multiply, until one feels that his chances even

of food and clothing, for himself and those dependent on him, are by no means certain.

What a relief, therefore, in such embarrassments and troubles, to be able to say: "My Father in heaven is both rich and great. He is the possessor of all things. I will put my trust in Him, and I shall not want."

VI. Again. We must all look forward to the time when every earthly tie will be severed, and every domestic relation, however sacred, broken up forever.

What sad havoc the relentless Destroyer will make with our earthly bliss!

O, thou hateful and abhorred Death! How wilt thine eyes gloat and glisten when, in those abodes of peace, scattered through this town, in which, night by night, goodly companies are gathered for festivity and mirth, the minister of God stands up, in the robes of his office, to read the moving service for the burial of the dead; and down the same steps where the happy group of father, and mother, and sons, and daughters sit at eventide, the coffin, covered with its pall of woe, shall be slowly borne!

But blessed be God, even in the prospect of such calamities as this, though, through the weakness of our mortal nature, we are "sometimes afraid," yet do we "put our trust" in HIM. His grace will be sufficient for us.

O Death, we can face thee boldly now; for He who is the Destroyer of Death will give us the victory.

VII. And finally, we realize still more vividly the exceeding blessedness of a sure trust in God, when we contemplate our own departure from the world.

People may talk as they please about their willingness to die, but it is quite natural for us to shrink back at the approach of the pale Messenger. Such impressions in regard to death, which God's own children, as well as others, are sensible of, are designed to fill their minds with a holy and salutary fear, and to lead them to make due preparation for the close of life.

My friends, it is far better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in man. My trust is in the tender mercy of God forever and ever.

O ye, who have been endeavoring to satisfy the thirst of an immortal spirit at the broken cisterns of worldliness, "*taste and see how gracious the Lord is: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him. They who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.*"

## SERMON XI

### THE RICH FOOL.

God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? —ST. LUKE xii. 20.

WHEN the pedantic King James the First proposed on a certain occasion to grant a coat-of-arms to one of his favorites, it was attempted in the College of Heraldry to introduce Time and Eternity, as supporters in the seal. The only difficulty in the way was to find some device for representing *Eternity*.

A quiet, but most severe rebuke upon the short-sightedness of man, was given by the king's jester, who suggested that Eternity be made twice as much as Time.\*

It is well for us to hear the whole truth sometimes; and God has kindly ordered it that we *shall* hear it now and then, whether we are disposed or not.

The rich and the great are sometimes foolish enough to fancy that they are protected from unpleasant and

\* The scene is graphically described in Scott's "Fortunes of Nigel," vol. ii. chap. xx.

painful things of every sort by the wall of separation which divides their lot from that of others.

But if mortal man is afraid to give them warning, and tell them of the vanity of trusting in wealth and worldly pomp, there is ONE whose voice of thunder they cannot fail to hear.

To every person who is now building his hopes on temporal things alone, and living unmindful of all beyond the present hour, God is saying, as to the man in the parable of old, "*Thou fool, this night thy soul may be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?*"

The particular sin which our Saviour had in view was *covetousness*.

It will be worth our while to go over the parable in detail. I shall only premise that all are to be accounted *rich*, relatively speaking, who have more than enough for their actual necessities, and who could bestow a larger portion than they do upon the poor, if they felt disposed.

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully." We sometimes say of "*lucky* people," as the world calls them, that every thing they touch is turned to gold.

This is no sin. The rich man cannot be blamed because of the fruitfulness of his land. This prosperous condition, however, exposes him to temptation.

Solomon long ago declared, that "the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." Prov. i. 32.

With good reason did the Psalmist give warning to those whose worldly affairs are in a favorable train for success. "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." Psalm lxii. 10.

The parable now draws back the curtain, and we are permitted to inspect the mind of one who is rejoicing over his abundance, and who is only anxious to make "provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

It is seldom that we can feel sure that we know a man's *thoughts*. His *words* do not always express them.

The foolish rich man is thinking aloud. Listen. "He thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?"

A sad perplexity, indeed! He had more than he knew what to do with. He showed an over-anxiety about his worldly wealth in the little question, "What shall I do?"

He had more than enough to feed and clothe himself and his family, for the entertainment of his guests, and for the support of that becoming appearance in the world to which his station entitled him.

Proper thoughtfulness about these things would not have been wrong. He must have kept his eyes shut, however, not to be able to think of any convenient and useful way to dispose of the superfluity which he did not actually need. Had he been somewhat less

selfish, he might have discovered deserving objects of charity among the suffering poor. There must have been hungry persons to be fed, naked to be clothed, and ignorant ones to be taught. He might, also, have contributed a larger share toward the support and the spread of religion. These, and other channels of benevolence, would have readily suggested themselves to his mind, if he had been at all disposed to do right.

His tone and language show plainly enough that his sole object was to grasp every thing for himself. He talks of "*My* fruits," and "*My* goods."

He is still thinking aloud. We may sometimes gather instruction even from the words of a fool.

"And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods."

His granaries held abundance already to supply every reasonable want. Still he is not satisfied, and must reach forth after more. Like many foolish rich men of these later times, he could fix no limit to his desires.

In their poverty, people think that the possession of a certain moderate sum would render them contented and happy. Give them this amount, and their desires have doubled. Instead of taking the increase of wealth as an evidence that God wishes them to act as His stewards, and to use it for His glory, they be-



gin to look out for new chances of profitable investment, and for larger sources of gain.

O, the curse of covetousness! How it eats all the humanity out of our nature, and leaves nothing but the feelings of the brute.

Who can greatly blame the suffering poor, who mock at the misfortunes of the miserly rich!

It is said that, some hundred years ago, there was a scarcity of corn in Egypt, and the people were daily perishing of want. Still, some avaricious merchants hoarded up their stock until it became worth its weight in gold.

Among these was an old miser, who had filled a granary at the last plenteous harvest. Day by day, as the famine wasted his fellow-men, he sat upon the steps of his store-house, speculating on their sufferings, and contriving how he could make the utmost usury out of God's bounty.

At length there was no more corn elsewhere; famishing crowds surrounded his granary, and besought him, as a charity, to give them a little food for all their wealth. Gold was piled around him; the miser's soul was satisfied with the prospect of boundless riches.

Slowly he unclosed his iron doors, but recoiled, terror-stricken, from his treasures. Heaven had sent the worm into his corn; and, instead of piles of yellow grain, he gazed on festering masses of rotteness and corruption. Starving as the people were, they raised

a shout of triumph; but the miser heard it not. He had perished in his hour of evil pride.\*

But we must not interrupt the foolish rich man again. He thus closes his soliloquy:

"I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

We are not told what form of religion he professed. He may have been orthodox in his *faith*—in *conduct*, he was an *atheist*.

He lived only to enjoy himself. He did not deserve to be trusted with a *soul*. It would have been bad enough to address such words to his sensual *body*.

Considering that his life, like that of every mortal, was "as a vapor," fleeting and uncertain, it was rather presumptuous to be promising himself long "*years*" of happiness.

Men may add house to house, and field to field; they may, as they fondly trust, have "much goods laid up for *many* years"; they may speak and act as if they felt certain that such would be the case—but the end may be far otherwise than they wish.

The vision of happiness upon which the rich man in the parable had been feasting his imagination, was soon scattered forever.

"God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul

\* This incident is taken, with some abbreviations and verbal alterations, from Warburton's "Crescent and Cross," p. 107.

shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

"*Thou fool!*" Such is the humiliating title applied to one who persuaded himself that he was supremely wise.

"*This night,*" this very night, as opposed to the many years he had taken it for granted that he should enjoy.

"Thy *soul* shall be *required* of thee!" Whether willing or unwilling, prepared or unprepared, He who has power over soul and body shall force thee to loose thy hold on life.

Observe the withering sarcasm in the closing words: "Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

They will be his no longer. "He heapeth up riches," says David, "and cannot tell who shall gather them."

"I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun, (is the vain lamentation which Solomon puts into the mouth of one who had delighted himself in the multitude of his riches); I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it to the man that shall be after me; and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool." Eccles. ii. 18, 19.

The enlarged barns may have been built, the granaries overflow, the gold and silver are heaped up—

but what use are they to him *then*? "This night" his soul is summoned to its great account.

There would be excitement enough, no doubt, on the morning after so startling an event. The whole household would be in confusion and dismay; the children and servants alarmed beyond measure, and scarcely venturing to look into the darkened chamber of sudden death.

The tidings would soon be spread. Every one would look solemn at the moment. But, ere long, the undertaker, with his cool, business manner, appears to make preparations for the burial. The body is laid out in state, and then the grave hides it from human view.

Within a few hours' space, the tale has ceased to interest or disturb. No one seems much to care. Why *should* they? The covetous rich man had done no good in life. Who could be expected to wish or to pray that his days might be prolonged? What would the world be the better for his living, or the worse for his final removal?

The inscription upon his tomb might be flattering in the extreme; but even the engraver who was paid for putting it there, would laugh at its untruthfulness.

The conclusion which our Saviour gives to the parable, shows that others, besides this one individual, should share in his miserable doom: "So is he that

layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

The soul must make its choice. If it shall determine for *self*, we have seen the end which it must certainly expect. If *God* be its choice; then, at death, instead of *leaving* riches, it goes to *inherit* riches—enduring riches—in that treasure-house above, where there is no danger of failure, and no possibility of loss.

"There was a certain nobleman," says the quaint Bishop Hall, "who kept a jester, to whom he one day gave a staff, with a charge to keep it till he should meet with one who was a greater fool than himself. Not many years after the nobleman fell sick, even unto death. The fool came to see him. His sick lord said to him, 'I must shortly leave you.'

"'And whither art thou going?' said the fool.

"'Into another world,' was the reply.

"'And when will you come again? Within a month?'

'No.'

"'Within a year?'

"'No.'

"'When then?'

"'Never.'

"'Never!' said the fool; 'and what provision hast thou made for thy entertainment there?'

"'None at all.'

"'No!' said the fool; 'none at all! Here, take my

staff, for, with all my folly, I am not guilty of such folly as this.'"

Can any of you be accused of like want of consideration and forethought? Is any one caring mainly for self, and thus stinting the church of her rights, and neglecting the poor? To you the voice of God may be saying now, leaving you scarcely any time in which to make amends for your wrong: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

## SERMON XII.

### LION-LIKE BOLDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

The righteous are as bold as a lion.—PROV. xxviii., *part of 1st verse.*

WHO are the *righteous*? I might answer, in a single sentence, that they are *those who do right*.

This definition would be true, without regard to sect, or party, or race, or nation. Every one who does right, be he pagan or barbarian bond or free, is righteous.

The good, plain Saxon of righteous, is *right wise*.

But the text is taken from the Bible; and here we must look for light to guide us in determining upon the correctness of the definition which common sense has suggested.

Before man had fallen, and the taint of original sin had left its indelible mark upon us, the righteous were those who were conformed, in all respects, to the known will of God.

Such righteousness implied a blameless walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.

But now, as fallen creatures, none can claim to be

righteous, according to the strict requirements of the Law.

We find, however, that even after Adam's transgression, some individuals are spoken of in Scriptural history, in a *comparative* sense, as righteous. Thus, Noah is called righteous; and Abraham supposed (a woeful mistake, to be sure!) that there might be fifty righteous persons in wicked Sodom.

Compared with their neighbors, who are outrageously bad, and who sin without compunction or remorse, there are many who may be called righteous. St. James speaks of this class as living in the world in his time, when, as now, there was no question of the fact that the earnest "prayers of a righteous man" availed much with God.\*

But while we must acknowledge that, in the limited sense just given to the words, there have *always* been righteous persons, let us never forget the great and fundamental truth which is set forth in our Eleventh Article of religion, that "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith." So much for the description of persons mentioned in the text.

A *certain quality* is here ascribed to them.—"The righteous are *as bold as a lion*."

It is noteworthy how often, in the Bible, the particular characteristics of the lower orders of creation

\* Genesis vii. 1-9; Genesis xviii. 23; and St. James v. 16.



are referred to, as affording a model for us. Thus, our blessed Saviour bids His disciples imitate the wisdom of the serpent, and the harmlessness of the dove. He himself is described as a gentle and unresisting lamb. And again he appears, in the Revelation of St. John, as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.\*

So, too, in the text, "the righteous" are represented as possessing the boldness of the king of beasts.

"*As bold as a lion*" seems to have been a proverb from ancient times. "This noble animal is the most perfect model of boldness and courage. He never flees from the hunters, nor is frightened by their onset. If their number forces him to yield, he retires slowly, step by step, frequently turning upon his pursuers. He has been known to attack a whole caravan; and, when obliged to retire, he always retires fighting, and with his face to the enemy."†

One of the bravest of the kings of England is known, to this day, as Richard *the lion-hearted*.

And well may the unflinching courage of the lion be mentioned as a distinguishing mark of the righteous, who can only be what the name imports by being *bold*.

I. Boldness is indispensable at the very *beginning* of the Christian course.

\* St. Matthew x. 17; Isaiah liii. 7; and Rev. v. 5.

† "Paxton's Illustrations of Natural History of Scripture," p. 295.

When we are commanded, by a voice from Heaven, to come out and be separate from the evil world, and, by Baptism and Confirmation, to declare openly and unreservedly that we have chosen the service of God, does it require no boldness to *obey* the call?

Let those answer who have gone through with the painful struggle which it costs, before the mind can be brought to take this decided stand.

Let those answer who, although as thoroughly convinced as we are, that such solemn obligations should be faithfully discharged, are yet lacking in the *courage* which must prompt them to act.

Aye, it *does* require the "boldness of the lion" to declare, before men and angels, that we are not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and to engage manfully to fight under His banner against the enemies of our salvation.

II. Again. Boldness is required in the discharge of the duties which must be met day by day.

What bright examples have been placed before us in the lives of the saints of God!

Moses, meek and mild as he was, possessed the bravery of a hero, and "feared not the wrath of the king."

Caleb and Joshua resolutely stood their ground against the sweeping current of rebellion. Elijah dared King Ahab's anger to his face. David exclaims, with holy reliance on the protection of the

Almighty: "Though an host of men should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear."

We read of the boldness of Peter and John, in the Jewish Sanhedrim—a boldness which cost them stripes and a dungeon.

We are told, again, that "Paul and Barnabas waxed bold," and proclaimed to unwilling ears the truth concerning Christ and the church, in the synagogue at Antioch.

St. Paul, who showed no lack of boldness whenever occasion called it forth, begged\* the prayers of Christian friends for a larger measure of this gift, "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly"; and again, "that I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

Examine the history of the martyrs and confessors of the church, reaching back to the early days of Christianity, and see how, in every age, the same lion-like boldness has inspired them all, giving them strength to stand unmoved in the presence of rulers and kings, to witness a good confession before an unbelieving world, to make light of suffering and reproach, to chant songs of triumph amidst the horrors of the dungeon, and to rejoice, in their grievous afflictions, for Jesus' sake.

See Athanasius before the imperial council of

\* Hebrews xi. 27; Numbers xiv. 6-10; 1 Kings xviii. 10, &c.; Psalm xxvii. 1-3; Acts iv. 13, and xiii. 46; Ephesians vi. 20, 21.

heresy. Watch those two gray-haired Bishops at the stake, braving the fury of the flames, rather than adopt the false doctrines of Rome. "Be of good courage, master Ridley (cried out Hugh Latimer, from his fiery furnace), and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."

There are more private occasions, with nothing to render their words or deeds peculiarly notorious, when the righteous should be bold. St. Mark records (xv. 43) an instance of the sort, when, after our Saviour had been spit upon, and reviled, and crucified as a guilty offender, he says that Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counselor, risked his reputation and his life, and went "boldly unto Pilate," and begged the body of Jesus for decent burial.

Those brave souls are now acting the same noble part who, in these days of blasphemy and rebuke, are not afraid to show favor to God's children who may be under a cloud of reproach, and trodden under foot by the mighty.

And again, in more ordinary matters still, the same boldness is indispensable.

How true to the life is a little notice which I lately saw in a letter from a good Missionary among our Indian tribes:

"It is a pleasing spectacle," he says, "to behold groups of Red-men coming up to the church toward evening, when their work is over, to learn to pray.

They kneel for both silent and vocal prayer. To do so at first was a sore trial to the poor Indians. They always encountered ridicule when they did so; and this is the most powerful weapon to gain a point, or frighten those who would make a change for the better. Now, the man or woman who refuses to kneel in the church, is the rare exception."

Would to God that the same could be said of all who live in Christian lands, and enjoy the privileges of the Gospel!

Surely there is but little of the lion's boldness in the character of those who, while members of Christ's body by holy Baptism, fed and protected by the mercy of God, and looking to the merits of His blessed Son to save them, are afraid to kneel down and confess Him as their master.

Oh, it is a lamentable truth, that there are too many *Christians* who are not *righteous*! The one word should imply the other; but, alas! it is not so.

III. Once more. The boldness of the righteous is manifested at the approach of death.

There is something in human nature which instinctively shrinks back at the thought of dissolution. The best of Christians have shared in the emotions of awful solemnity which attend the coming of death. But when the righteous man actually draws near the border line which divides time from eternity, no matter what his apprehension may have been before, the fear of death is gone.

"Tell those that are approaching the bed of death," says one,\* "from my experience, that it has no terrors; that in the hour of death, when it is most wanted, there is mercy with the Most High; and that some change takes place which fits the soul to meet its God."

"I, a poor, weak, timorous man," exclaims another,† "once as much afraid of death as any—I, that have been many years under the terror of death, come now, in the mercy of God, and by the power of his grace, composedly and with joy, to look death in the face."

There is, indeed, "*dying grace kept for a dying hour.*"

Several ways have now been pointed out in which God's people will exhibit becoming boldness; and it has seemed the more proper to do so, inasmuch as a spirit of cowardice is creeping over the Christian world, palsying the energies of believers, and causing the enemy to rejoice.

Let us all aim at being something more than Christians in *name*. Let us cultivate the *decision*, the *boldness*, and the *endurance*, which our profession demands.

When tempted in any way by that despicable "fear of man which bringeth a snare," to shrink back from duty, or to deny the least principle of the faith, let each Christian soul say to himself, as good Nehemiah did, "Should such a man as I flee?"

\* Sir William Forbes.

† Halyburton.

## SERMON XIII.

### NOT FAR FROM GOD'S KINGDOM.

Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.—ST. MARK xii., *part of 34th verse.*

ANY thing lost by a few moments' delay, and which seemed certainly our own, is generally an occasion of vexation and discontent.

To see a friend riding briskly away, by the time we have reached the door to deliver a parting message; to have the boat push off from the dock, while we are hurrying down to get on board: these small disappointments will serve as illustrations in greater things.

A certain Scribe, who was listening one day to our Saviour's words, was favorably impressed by what he heard; and in a spirit of candor, uncommon among the Jews, proposed some questions, with a view of obtaining additional information.

I need not occupy your time by repeating the conversation.

Our Lord was evidently gratified to meet with such a frank and unprejudiced mind, and kindly remarked: "*Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*"

As if he had said: "You have a just idea of the relative value of the inward change which religion effects in the heart, and of the outward manifestation of a devotional spirit in the appointed forms of worship, and but little is lacking to render you a worthy disciple of the MESSIAH."

The expression, "Kingdom of God," is synonymous with the "Kingdom of Heaven." Both refer to the reign of Christ upon earth, and to the final consummation of his glory in Heaven. In other words, to God's universal and everlasting kingdom, the CHURCH.

It was a favorite figure of speech with our blessed Lord, and almost every parable which he delivered, was a likeness or an illustration of this kingdom. And thus it was with reference to the Scribe's fitness for the privileges of the church, that Jesus said to him, in terms of comfort and encouragement, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

The opportunities which people have of knowing their duty, and the use which they make of the mean of grace, determine their relative position with regard to this kingdom. Some are near to it, even at the door, while others stand afar off. They have it in their own power to enter the fold and be safe, or to wander away and perish.

St. Paul describes the case of most of us, when he says: "Ye who sometime were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Ephes. ii. 13.



Among those who are regular in their attendance at church, there are always a goodly number who, although they have never taken any decided stand in regard to religion, evidently have some things in common with Christians, and, to a certain extent, are identified with them. They are "*not far* from the kingdom of God."

I shall bring before you several of these classes.

I. We find many excellent people, whose goodness is of a *negative* kind. By the judicious management and advice of parents and teachers, they have grown up free from the grosser sins, and have escaped the pollutions of the world. They neither swear, nor use intoxicating drinks, nor profane the Lord's day, nor do any thing which (reasoning after the manner of men) you could call positively bad. They think themselves so much better than many professing Christians whom they know, that they take pride in their prudence and self-control, and boast over those who are tempted and fall.

The good habits which they have gained, are the very ones which they would be expected to cultivate as the children of God; and the fact that they have already formed these, smoothes the way for their entrance into the church. They are "*not far* from the kingdom of God."

But they must approach nearer than this if they hope to be saved. The church comes to you, in Christ's name, to teach, to guide, and to aid you in your prep-

aration for heaven. While then those who, as in the class just described, by their freedom from the worst forms of evil, are in a hopeful state, because, in this particular, they are not far from God's kingdom, they should remember that now, as in ancient days, the Lord "*adds to the church* such as shall be saved." Acts ii. 47.

II. Another class of persons are fitted, by the character of their minds, and the nature of their studies, to take an interest in Christianity and the Church, from an *intellectual* point of view. The arguments in support of the truth of our holy religion are so strong and convincing, that a mere taste for logical investigation leads some to enter the lists as its champions.

So, too, with the claims of the Church. These can be so plainly proved by Scripture and history, that none who take time for a fair and full investigation of the subject, and who have candor enough to acknowledge that they have hitherto been in the wrong, will fail to be convinced. The more carefully the whole field of inquiry is explored, the more clearly does the light of truth break in upon the mind. One who has taken his stand upon the broad platform of evangelical truth and apostolical order, can put to flight every assailant who rashly ventures to measure weapons with him; and the ruddy David, with a sling, is able to vanquish the giant, proudly marching forth in fancied victory.

Now it may readily be supposed that the very feel-

ing of security which this impenetrable armor gives to the champion of Christianity and the Church, may lead him to deceive himself in matters of the highest moment.

The interest which he manifests is most commendable. His zeal is worthy of imitation. He may not be "far from the kingdom of God."

But let him remember that religion is something more than correctness of intellect and soundness of judgment. It is a life-giving principle, regulating the *will*, as well as directing the *creed*.

III. A third class, who, in disposition and habits, are "not far from the kingdom of God, may be described as the *amiable*. The very signification of the term—*fit to be loved*—shows that their disposition is what every Christian should be anxious to preserve.

Their gentleness of manner, kindness of heart, activity and usefulness, their obliging and cheerful compliance with the wishes of others: how such a disposition is calculated to charm! And so it should.

An individual blessed with this trait of amiability, oftentimes goes further. The honest and devout sentiment of his heart is heard to express itself in the becoming wish: "I *would* be one of God's people!" But he seldom ventures resolutely and decidedly to declare: "I *will* be!"

But all this may be felt and expressed, and still no just idea be entertained of his condition as a helpless

sinner, and of the absolute need of Christ's atonement and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The goodness which we discover and admire in the amiable man or woman, does not extend so far. But the reformation of our poor, corrupt nature, must reach the *heart*. Mere amiability is not enough. Religion is more than this. It implies repentance, and faith, and obedience.

Many, who belong to the class of amiable persons, have not even been baptized. In various attractive and lovable traits of character, they are not far from God's kingdom; but until they submit to this ordinance of Christ, they are not *in* the kingdom; and without discharging this obligation, and the duties which follow it, they have no promise of its blessings.

IV. One other class which I shall speak of, as embracing many "not far from the kingdom of God," is that of the *generous and liberal spirited*.

Close-fisted parsimony disgusts. Kind, whole-souled benevolence wins favor and love. But this, alone, is not religion. True enough, a Christian, destitute of generosity, is a poor, unprofitable creature, undeserving of his name.

There are, perhaps, quite as many kind, unselfish people out of the Church as in it. This is a sad reproach to Christians. At the same time, however, it does not prove that mere generosity will save the soul. What says St. Paul? "Though I bestow *all*

my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity"—or true Christian love—"it will profit me nothing."

During the rage of the pestilence in one of our large cities, when persons of every rank and grade, who could possibly get away, were fleeing for their lives, an avowed unbeliever heroically staid behind, and tenderly nursed the sick and fed the poor. This was most praiseworthy. We feel disposed to overlook a great deal that was wrong in such a man, for the sake of the good which he did; and we hope that God will not be extreme to mark his misdoings.

The spirit which this person exhibited was most assuredly in accordance with the teachings of Christianity. It was the active, earnest, unselfish disposition, which we are all expected to cultivate.

Unbeliever though he was, yet, in *this* particular, and that a very important one, he set a good example to Christians. We might even say, that so far as this manifestation of kind-heartedness and humanity was concerned, that he was "not far from the kingdom of God."

But the great fact remains unchanged by such circumstances as this, that with the opportunity to do so, we are obliged to come within the bounds of this kingdom, if we desire to secure God's favor, and to receive His largest blessings.

Such startling statements should set people to thinking, and make them afraid of remaining in a condition

where they have no claim to the covenanted promises of God.

Some of you must know that you yourselves are "*not far* from the kingdom of God." But, I beseech you, do not continue to occupy this uncertain and unprofitable position, when it is quite possible for you to obey the commandments of Him whose yoke is easy and His burden light.

We read of benighted travelers, benumbed with cold, lying down to die in sight of their homes.

There, in the distance, is the smoke rising from the chimney, and the cheering light, as it shines through the casement, betokens the comfort which a little more exertion would enable them to reach. But too much strength has been wasted in unavailing pursuits. The short, intermediate space seems now an impassable gulf.

Oh, what a bitter disappointment to those "*not far* from the kingdom of God," to perish within sight of that HOME!

## SERMON XIV.

### THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT.—WHITSUNDAY.

The love of the Spirit.—ROMANS XV., *part of 30th verse.*

FOR hundreds of years, the great feast of WHITSUNDAY has been everywhere kept by the Christian church, with anthems, and songs, and the celebration of the blessed Sacrament.

JESUS had foretold the coming of a COMFORTER, when he himself should leave the world. How anxiously must the disciples have watched and waited, wondering who this Comforter could be! Some looked, no doubt, for an angelic message. Some for a prophet, like those which had appeared before. Some for a lawgiver greater than Moses. After ten days of unavailing conjecture and earnest hope, the promise was fulfilled. "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the HOLY GHOST." Acts ii. 2-4.

The text will direct our thoughts into a proper channel for the anniversary of this wonderful event.

**"THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT."**

Each person of the blessed Trinity bears a part in the recovery and salvation of our race. The FATHER'S love first devised the plan. It was the infinite mercy of the SON OF GOD which prompted him to sanctify our nature by taking it unto himself.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT, the Lord and Giver of life, being of one substance, majesty and glory with the FATHER and the SON, unites us to Christ, the Divine head of the church, and imparts to the appointed means of grace their peculiar efficacy.

"The *love* of the SPIRIT" is manifested in the ample provision which He makes for the well-being of mankind, and for the special attention bestowed upon each individual case.

By the influence of the HOLY GHOST, the first apostles were fitted for their work. HE bestowed upon them wisdom and strength. Whether their gifts and endowments consisted in steadiness of faith, in the ability to work miracles or to preach the Gospel in diverse languages, all were derived from the "One and the selfsame SPIRIT, dividing to every man severally as He will." 1 Cor. xii. 11.

Enlightened and instructed by Him, the Evangelists and Apostles wrote the books of the New Testament. Through his Divine agency, an unbroken succession of pastors and teachers has been raised up for the perfecting of those who have become followers of Christ, and for building up of his kingdom upon earth.



Great and glorious as this work of the HOLY SPIRIT is, His love is still more plainly seen in the gracious influences which He exerts upon *each individual* who does not drive him off by willful and long neglect.

I. The HOLY GHOST was sent to "*convince the world of sin.*" Reading and persevering study may make one master of the most abstruse points of theology. He may have weapons at command to ward off every hostile foe who would besiege the citadel of his faith.

But what is all this worth, unless the Spirit of God shall open the eyes of his understanding, that he may know how to apply the Scriptures to his own case, unless he is shown the corruption of his nature, and his alienation from God; unless his self-righteousness and pride give place to humbleness of mind; unless his stubborn will be brought to yield itself to the law of HIM who has the fullest claim upon the love and obedience of those whom he has made, preserved, and redeemed?

II. "The *love* of the SPIRIT" is further manifested in consenting to take up his abode in the heart thus prepared to receive him, and in discharging the office of SANCTIFIER. The youth who is brought to feel the need of giving up his idle habits, and of bending the whole energies of his mind to study, can no more be considered a finished scholar at the outset, than the person can be said to be a *perfect* Christian, who has merely put himself in the way of becoming so.

A deep sense of sin, and a settled determination to

forsake it, are only the first steps in a long course of self-discipline and obedience.

The power of inborn corruption is to be overcome. The snares of the Evil One are to be resisted. Habits of holiness must be formed. We shall soon enough discover that our own strength, our own watchfulness, our own anxiety to do right, will not enable us to accomplish all this.

The DIVINE SPIRIT of God—the “Sanctifier of the faithful,” must be constantly and fervently invoked. HE “helpeth our infirmities.” We “live in the SPIRIT.” We “walk in the SPIRIT.” Love, and joy, and peace, and long-suffering, and gentleness, and goodness, and faith, and meekness, and temperance, are the fruits which HE enables us to bring forth, to the glory of God’s name.

III. “The *love* of the SPIRIT” also works within us such a change of character and habits, that God the Father looks upon us with favor, as his redeemed children.

In this sense he is called the SPIRIT of *adoption*. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”—“The SPIRIT beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”\*

Before this adoption, we had no claim upon the care and goodness of the Almighty. Out of pure kindness

\* Romans viii. 26. Galatians v. 25; v. 16; and v. 22. Romans viii. 14-16.

and compassion, the HOLY SPIRIT has brought us into a new and holy relation to him.

IV. Again. "The *love* of the SPIRIT" is displayed in teaching us to make known our wants in prayer, and to ask with undoubting confidence.

The blessed REDEEMER is robbed of no glory in ascribing these offices to the HOLY GHOST. *His* sufferings and death alone secured the benefits of the Spirit's agency to man. "It is *his* SPIRIT"; hence we read of "the supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus," not only by reason of the essential union which subsists between the persons of the Godhead, but because the right of bestowing it was granted Him in the covenant of redemption.

While, therefore, the merits of the SAVIOUR must be the only ground of hope, in presenting our supplications to the FATHER, it is the SPIRIT who teaches us to pray. "Through Christ we both have access by one SPIRIT unto the FATHER."—"We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the SPIRIT itself maketh intercession for us. . . And He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the SPIRIT; because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."\*

V. Again. Unless we persist in resisting His gracious influences, the Holy Spirit will renew and change each sinful soul into the image of God.

\* Philip. i. 19; Ephes. ii. 18; and Romans viii. 26.

There will, indeed, be no formal type in which the personal qualities of Christians will be cast. "The HOLY SPIRIT," as has been well remarked, "does not destroy the natural, individual characteristics of the man, nor work a living being into a living likeness, nor mere passive matter into a dead, unvarying mould. Thus, in human frames, we see the general likeness to the one original type, while yet there are as many specific peculiarities as there are individuals. Thus, too, though the sun is one, and every dew-drop is a globule, and every globule reflects the sun's one image, yet there is ever with each reflection a new combination of colors, and rainbow hues glitter on every side."

St. Paul had a similar thought in his mind, when he said, that "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Not that all are influenced alike, or make equal advancement in holiness. This will depend upon our disposition, our opportunities, and the diligence with which they are improved.

VI. "The *love* of the SPIRIT" fails not for any trifling cause; but if we show ourselves ready to be enlightened, and guided aright, He will continue his kind offices until death.

At our Confirmation, the Bishop beseeches God to strengthen us "with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter,

and to increase" within us "his manifold gifts of grace."

Although we do not claim that *miraculous* gifts are imparted in this holy rite, yet even those who have presented themselves with too little reflection upon the important step which they were about to take, have felt afterward that the hand of the Almighty was stretched out over them, and that His good SPIRIT was gently leading them to the knowledge and obedience of His holy word.

VII. Nor will "the *love* of the SPIRIT" end with *this* life. By His quickening influences we shall all be raised up from the grave. It is true our blessed Saviour is "the resurrection and the life"; but as the Holy Ghost is now left in His stead, to govern and instruct the church, so, at the last day, the Divine Spirit will be His agent to raise the dead. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Romans viii. 11.

More than this. It is the "SPIRIT and the bride," or church, who invite us to share in the glories of a better world. The Spirit of grace and holiness shall there be ever present, and universally diffused. "The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Romans xiv. 17.

If "the love of the SPIRIT" be thus clearly manifested toward creatures who have shown themselves

so undeserving of his notice, ought we not to be most careful not to vex nor grieve Him? Ought we not to endeavor to obey the commands of God, as soon as his will is known?

Some of you, doubtless, have had more serious thoughts at one time than another. You have felt your minds less disposed to wander in prayer. You have listened with more interest to the sermon. You have been almost persuaded to attempt the discharge of some long-neglected duty.

In such cases the SPIRIT of God has been striving with you.

And shall this Divine Being show so much interest in your behalf, and you manifest none for yourselves? Shall He convince you of sin, offer to sanctify your evil nature, promise you strength to serve God acceptably, and point to the blessedness of heaven as the reward of faithful obedience, and you draw back and treat His favors with contempt?

I might remind you of the *danger* of following such a course. But the day on which the Holy Ghost came down from heaven to bless the world, is no fitting time for threatenings.

I beseech you, for your own sakes, for the sake of the goodness which God has showed you, for the grace which He is waiting to bestow, no longer treat with an indifference so marked and inexcusable, this "love of the SPIRIT."

## SERMON XV.

### SPECIAL PROVIDENCE.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.—ST. MATTHEW x. 29-31.

WHEN GEORGE WASHINGTON had been graciously preserved amidst the terrible carnage which attended Braddock's defeat, he was not ashamed to leave on record this evidence of his faith:

"By the all-powerful dispensations of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, although death was leveling my companions on every side of me."

His friend, Dr. James Craik, who was with him in the battle, was often afterward heard to say: "I expected every moment to see him fall. Nothing but the superintending care of Providence could have saved him from the fate of all around him."

Let unbelievers in the special providence of God, listen, also, to the language of the matter-of-fact

Dr. Franklin, whom no one will suspect of giving the least countenance to vain theories and "old wives' fables."

The Convention was in session at Philadelphia to frame our Federal Constitution. Weeks and weeks had passed, but strife and confusion so far prevailed that no perceptible good was done.

A proposition was then made for daily prayers, and Franklin rose in his place and said: "In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the Divine protection. Our prayers were heard and graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we forgotten this powerful FRIEND? or do we no longer need HIS assistance? I have lived a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proof I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men.

"And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured in the Sacred Writings, that 'Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without His concur-



ring aid, we shall succeed no better in this political building, than the builders of Babel."

The proposition for daily prayers, thus earnestly supported, was carried; and we, in this generation, have lived to enjoy the fruit of the Divine blessing, which was bestowed in answer to these supplications.

Alas! is there not reason to fear that we have far less faith than our fathers? Must we indeed invoke the shades of departed patriots and philosophers to shame our unbelief?

The hand of God is recognized, it is true, in a *general* way; but so *very* general, as to make us lose sight of the fact that the Almighty Ruler of heaven and earth is a great and powerful Being, presiding as a KING upon the throne of the universe.

Wisdom is certainly a most desirable thing; but if the possession of it must lead us to attempt to banish the Almighty from the care and control of the world which He made, we shall be much better off without it. It would be preferable to believe the earth to be flat, as the ancients did, and the sun a mass of liquid flame, than to cherish one lingering doubt of the all-pervading influence of God's providence.

Contrast the cold, lifeless speculations of blind philosophy with the simple and confiding faith which can lift an unpresumptuous eye to heaven, and say to HIM who dwells therein :

“In each event of life how clear,  
Thy ruling hand I see;  
Each blessing to my soul more dear,  
Because conferr’d by THEE.”

The Christian knows nothing of accident or chance.  
He looks to the true source of all things:

“Times of sickness, times of health,  
Blighting want and cheerful wealth,  
All our pleasures, all our pains,  
Come and end as God ordains.”

Our Saviour has expressed the whole subject in a single sentence, when he says in the text, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your FATHER.” In other words, if the great God who made all things, feels such tender solicitude for the welfare of His creatures, that the smallest and most insignificant of birds, (two being sold for a farthing), is not beneath His notice, need His people be afraid that He will ever lose sight of *them*, in sickness or in health, in poverty or in joy?

A good deal of allowance ought, perhaps, to be made for the skepticism of people on many subjects; for really the religious training of multitudes is so bad, that it is almost surprising that they have true faith in any thing.

But if, from our very childhood, we are taught to regard God as our heavenly Father—a Father who

watches, with anxious eye, all we do, and hears, with ready ear, every request we make, we must always preserve a due reverence for ONE so great, and good, and holy, who is about our path, and about our bed, and who spies out all our ways.

With any other system of education than this, I do not wonder that the doctrine of a particular providence is looked upon with distrust.

Persons of very weak faith can easily understand, or persuade themselves that they can, how the Almighty was present on Mount Sinai, amidst the lightnings and thunderings, and the thick darkness, and the deafening notes of the trumpet. They can imagine how He was present, in power and majesty, at the crucifixion, when the rocks were rent, and the earth was shaken to its centre, and the sheeted dead started up from their graves. They can recognize God's providence here, I say, but when we come to individual cases, then their faith is staggered.

If the minister of God goes into the chamber of sickness, and, kneeling down by the sufferer's bed, beseeches the Great Physician to restore the diseased to health, and he *does* recover, how many, think you, believe for one moment that the prayer which God's servant offered had any thing to do with it? Would not persons who believed themselves to be good Christians, spend their breath in talking of the physician's skill and the nurse's care, without a passing

thought of the special providence of God, invoked by the prayer of faith?

Then, again, during the hot months of Summer, when we have so many frightful storms, and the forked lightning shivers the stately oak, and strikes down man and beast, who ventures to believe that God's watchful care, which keeps us safe, is influenced at all by the fervent petition which we had previously offered up in church, when no danger was nigh at hand—" *From lightning and tempest, good Lord deliver us*"?

If we take the ideas expressed in the Bible out of the stereotyped forms in which they are imprinted upon our memories, and repeat them in other words, we find it difficult to realize how much God promises to do for us.

Read, for example, our Saviour's plain direction to those in doubtfulness or distress. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." St. Matt. vii. 7.

What is there which is not included here? And yet, if I take this form, and place therein the things I need—bread, and clothes, and friends, and money, and health—and say to my neighbor that I intend to apply to my heavenly Father for them, he would be inclined to think that I was becoming deranged.

But still, this is precisely what our Saviour offers to do—to hear *my* individual prayers for *my* individual wants.

Suppose that a Christian man or woman is sadly pinched for the lack of money, which is really needed for some important end, relating to body or soul. Such a person prays, most earnestly, and in faith, that the deficiency may be supplied. Do you suppose that the money would be found?

I need not wait for an answer elsewhere to sustain *my* faith. I speak what I do know, and testify that which I have seen. God *will* answer such a petition. He will, by His overruling providence, so order human events, that what was needed shall be graciously supplied.

If we settle down into the too common notion, that the machinery of the universe has been wound up, once for all, with a great key, and that things must run on, in one unvarying course, until the end, prayer to God to change this course "must be a sad masquerade, as deficient in taste as it is in ingenuousness. To announce our wants to God cannot be its office; for, to an Infinite Intelligence, they must be already known. Nor, if this doctrine be true, can His knowledge be of any avail. To importune for special blessings, temporal or spiritual, would be superfluous, since those blessings, if they fall within the onward way of unalterable laws, will become ours without prayer—and no prayer can procure them if they do not.

"To exert a persuasive influence on the Divine mind is impossible, since that mind is inexorable.

What, in such a case, would prayer become but a species of pious legerdemain, where, under pretense of pleading with God for that which is no longer His to dispense, we gain the chance of communing with His Spirit, and get grace, not from Him, but by a species of self-development. Were such the Divine government, meditation, not prayer, would befit alike man's estate and God's eternal majesty."\*

Ah, my friends, even our own *Christian* land, as we presume to call it, is full of those who entertain such low and loose notions of prayer; and I must say, upon the authority of the Holy Scriptures, that this is nothing but *unbelief—infidelity!*

The merest smatterer in geology ventures to call in question the Mosaic account of the Deluge; and multitudes, who profess better things, smile with incredulity when the doctrine of a special providence is mentioned.

But, for myself, I fearlessly confess, that I believe in the Triune JEHOVAH—the great, the good, the mighty. I look to him for every precious gift in life, and for mercy at the judgment bar. This God shall be *my* God, forever and ever. He shall be *my* Guide unto death.

My friends, shall HE not be *yours* also?

\* Bishop Alonzo Potter—"Philadelphia Lectures on Evidences," pp. 146, 147.

## SERMON XVI.

### THE SAVIOUR TASTING DEATH FOR SINNERS—BEFORE CONFIRMATION.

Jesus . . . who . . . by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.—HEBREWS ii. 9.

TASTING death! A bitter draught indeed!

When Socrates, the wise and good, dwelling amidst the immoralities of Athens, was cruelly condemned to death, he conversed cheerfully with his weeping friends, during the gray and misty hours of morn, concerning the glorious hopes which even he, a poor benighted pagan, had of the soul's long life, and of coming bliss; and then, with untrembling hand, he took the cup of poisonous hemlock, and drank, and died.

\* The figurative language of the text is borrowed from this common mode of execution in ancient times.

But we read of another who "tasted death," in comparison with whose simple grandeur, Socrates, and all the philosophers and sages who have ever lived, must hide their diminished heads—the incarnate Son of God, who, out of pity and compassion

for our condemned and suffering race, of His own free-will and goodness, "*tasted death for every man.*"

We may suppose—and it would be no picture of the imagination either—that the whole human family were convicted of crime, and condemned to suffer, and that the terrible day had come when all must be led forth from their prison-house, each one holding a deadly cup, which he is required to drink. At this awful moment, the gracious Saviour approaches, and, taking the cups from the guilty offenders one by one, drinks the bitter draught Himself.

Yes, strange and unaccountable as it seems, Jesus has done all this for us. He has "*tasted death for every man.*" And oh, what indescribable agonies that death involved! The foreshadowing of the Crucifixion cast a deep gloom over His rugged and thorny path, long before the end.

When a poor woman, humbled under a sense of sin, drew near the Saviour, and, in token of her penitence and love, anointed Him with precious ointment, He saw, in this simple act, a preparation for His burial.

We stand breathless and awe-struck, while listening to His voice of agony in the garden. "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me!"

How can any sinner remain unmoved at the contemplation of such a spectacle?

"*Who tasted death for every man!*" Will *all*, then, be saved?



Most assuredly not. It is true, according to the blessed promises of the Bible, that God "willeth not the death of a sinner," and that Christ Jesus "gave Himself a ransom for *all*," and that "whosoever *will*, may come and take of the water of life freely."

But the same inspired volume describes the Son of Man as the final Judge of quick and dead, who will hereafter be revealed in flaming fire, "taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of His Son." 2 Thess. i. 8.

Notwithstanding the plainness with which these truths are set forth, there are some who *profess* to believe otherwise, and very many who *act* as though they were fully persuaded that no future punishment was to be apprehended.

The absurdity of the notion that *all* will finally be *saved*, because Christ *died* for all, was once thus happily exposed, in a chance discussion between two friends.

The advocate for universal salvation complained, that those professing to be orthodox Christians declared his doctrine to be inconsistent with reason.

"I will *prove* it to be so," answered the other. "You believe that Christ died for all, and that all for whom he died will eventually be saved?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"You do not believe there is a hell?"

"No."

"No punishment hereafter?"

"No," answered the advocate of Universalism; "men are punished for their sins in this life."

"Now, put your rational system together, if you can. It is just this, that Christ died to save all men from nothing at all! Not from *hell*, for you say there is none. Not from *punishment* in a future state of being, for man, you insist, receives his whole punishment in this life. Yours is the idle and maniac effort of seeing a man on dry land, in no danger of being drowned, and, at immense expense, throwing to him ropes and life-preservers. Your boasted religion is stark *infidelity*! If you believed the Bible, you would believe as we do."

"*Who tasted death for every man.*" Yes, blessed Saviour, this Thou hast done for us. Thou hast indeed overcome the sharpness of death, and opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

A benevolent individual builds a large and comfortable abode for the poor, and the sick, and the helpless, and freely invites everybody who needs to go in at the open gate. The offer of assistance is quite as extensive as the wants of the suffering. But, suppose that some should be too proud to accept of this free mercy, and others should express a doubt whether the physician in the hospital could do any more than might be accomplished by their own silly quackeries at home, will the benefits of the good man's liberality be enjoyed by the proud and the unbelieving?

No more will those be saved who do not go to Christ, even though He *has* died for all.

We must love Him for His goodness, and gladly obey His commandments, if we hope for a share in the blessings purchased by his precious death.

But is this the way with the world? Alas! alas! the course of man is too much after this sort. He plays his part well, perhaps, on the stage of life—well, I mean, in the sense which unthinking mortals put upon the word.

Years pass swiftly by, middle age is over, and the sun begins its decline in the heavens. In the estimation of the *world*, he has reached a venerable and honorable old age. But what is *God's* judgment concerning him?—as one who has wasted his life, and ruined his immortal soul!

Such is the condition of some who are present here to-day. Christ Jesus has “tasted death” for them, and yet they have no right nor title to the benefits of His atonement. They have never considered it worth while to think seriously about religion. They are in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. There is a death before them, which, if they persist in this indifference, they too must taste; not temporal agonies alone—the parting asunder of soul and body—but the anguish and remorse of *eternal* death.

All this will come to pass, if those who are *taught* their duty neglect to *do* it.

Now, one part of our obligation is, to acknowledge

our blessed Saviour before the world, and show that we are grateful to Him for "tasting death" for us on the Cross.

In the Episcopal Church, such a confession is made in the holy rite of Confirmation.

Jesus asks no *payment* from us in return for what He has done—for what recompense could we make? But He *does* expect obedience and love; and those of our people who have obedience and love, will come to the Bishop for a blessing.

"What! shall we be confirmed in our sins?" I have sometimes heard it asked by those who did not wish to do their duty, and who were glad to take advantage even of a shabby and unsatisfactory excuse for neglecting it.

I suppose so, my friends. I have never yet seen any who were not sinners when they came.

If we feel ashamed and sorry for our misdoings, and are willing to try, by God's help, to break off from our evil ways, we are in the proper frame of mind for Confirmation.

I greatly fear lest some here present, for whom Jesus "tasted death," will not be welcomed by Him hereafter as the purchase of His blood. If you ask me *why*, this is my answer:

I see persons of both sexes who know well enough that God is calling them, by His ministers and by the ordinances of the church, and by the strivings of the Spirit, to receive the offers of salvation while they

may, but who are too proud, or thoughtless, or self-willed, to care whether they are called or not. For the safety of such, have I not good reason to be afraid?

Then, again, I see parents who, at the baptism of their children, solemnly promised that, as soon as they reached the age when they could realize the importance of such a step, and had been properly prepared for it, they would "*bring them to the Bishop to be confirmed.*"

"*Bring them.*" What persevering effort, what earnest conversation with them by day and by night, what faithfulness in prayer, what uprightness of example, are included in these two words! And still, many parents who have thus promised before God, have not kept their agreement. They have been waiting for their children to take a notion to come, without giving themselves any concern about it.

If there should be a rumor of the small-pox, they would bring them to be vaccinated; or if the plague were approaching, they would flee with their dear ones to a place of safety: but, when the fatal contagion of sin is at work in the system, and the curses which follow it are most certainly known,—when God has told them what means they should use in such a desperate case, and they themselves have promised to employ them, they make light of the obligation, and absolutely do nothing toward rescuing their offspring from ruin.

I have stood by the bedside of the young when grim Death was bearing them away, who wept and prayed, and were driven almost to distraction, because, in the time of health, they neglected the calls of the gracious SPIRIT.

And I have known bereaved parents, whose declining years were overspread with deepest despondency and gloom, because of the remorse they felt that their sons or daughters, through their gross neglect, had gone hence, unreconciled to God. Yes, they had perished, with no certain and sustaining hope, in spite of the glorious truth which should win every soul to the service of God, that Jesus had "tasted death for every man."

## SERMON XVII.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFELONG WORK—AFTER CONFIRMATION.

What lack I yet?—ST. MATTHEW xix. *part of 20th verse.*

A VERY curious state of society existed during the latter half of the seventeenth century, in the form of a band of bloody freebooters, commonly known as Buccaneers. From the sweet paradise of their island home, where, in their several relations of fathers, and brothers, and neighbors, and friends, they carefully observed the laws of God and man, they went forth to plunder and destroy the unoffending inhabitants of regions far and near.

The same individuals, who were justly distinguished among themselves for some of the noblest attributes of humanity, forgetful of the fact that truth, and mercy, and right-doing, should be world-wide in their operation, became the terror of the weak and unprotected throughout the length and breadth of the Southern waters.

The buccaneers did right, very right, in asking a blessing before their meals, and in their attention to prayer, and in their grateful thanksgivings for mer-

cies; but, alas! how much they lacked to make them good and acceptable in the sight of God. How revolting to the feelings of all true Christians is this endeavor to unite a life of holiness with the indulgence of the most depraved and sinful passions!

Those persons whose hearts are not changed and made better by the grace of God, sustain the same relation to the divine laws which the desperate men of whom I have just spoken bore to the ordinary rules of justice and humanity.

Morality, in its pride and self-conceit, may presumptuously ask, like the young man in the Gospel, "*What lack I yet?*" wholly unconscious of the sad deficiencies and defects in character and conduct which estranges it from the true service of God; and we can only pray to the HOLY SPIRIT, in earnestness and hope, that He will open the blind eyes, and enlighten the darkened soul.

It is my wish to say a few words to-day, which may be of benefit to those who have lately taken upon themselves the solemn vows of Confirmation. I trust, also, that every class of persons may hear something by which they may profit. We may suppose an individual to go home, after the administration of this holy rite, and say to himself: "I have now done what the Scriptures enjoin, and what the church has appointed. I have been baptized and confirmed. '*What lack I yet?*'"

In reply, I would say, you have made a good be-



ginning, my friend. Your baptism and confirmation will be worth a great deal to you, if properly improved, because they are God's own institutions, which will be accompanied by His blessing.

Thus you have been brought into the church, and received the seal of adoption. You are now within the enclosure of the Saviour's sheepfold. You are standing in the vineyard of the Lord, with the implements of labor in your hands.

Now you must begin to *work*. Do not fold your arms and sit down to rest, before you have done any thing to weary you. You ask, "What lack I yet?"

I. You lack *a thorough devotion to God's service*. Hitherto, you have thought mainly of pleasing yourself, and of winning favor with the world. Let your motive, in time to come, be a higher and nobler one—to gain the favor of the Almighty.

The devotion to which I refer, will make us ready to deny ourselves, and to treat inconveniences as trifling matters, and to serve our MASTER in public and private, with glad and determined minds.

Such devotion never discovers that its shoes are thinner, and the walking worse, and the weather more oppressively warm or severely cold on *Sundays* than on other days of the week.

It is not guilty of the inconsistency of supposing that a crowded party, and the stifling air at a concert, are quite endurable for several hours on a stretch, and

yet be ready to faint with exhaustion, at the thought of one hour in the house of God.

True devotion will prompt us to be satisfied with plain clothes and wholesome food, that what so many waste in needless extravagance, may be saved for the poor.

True devotion would never be willing to spend more in ribbons, and laces, and gew gaws, in a *month*, than it can afford for the church of Christ in a *year*—a willing five dollars for a ticket of admission to some scene of pleasure, and a grudging five cents for the Gospel.

When we speak of a man who is devoted to his business, or of a woman, engrossed with household cares, the words are easily understood. We think of mind, and heart, and energies, all centred on one object.

So should it be with our devotion to God. If He really is what what we profess to regard Him, and if eternal happiness be worth our pursuit, we should show by our conduct that the profession is not vain.

II. We may safely say to a novice who has lately been confirmed, and who has only had time to put forth a few efforts to lead a life of holiness, that he lacks *the spirit of prayer*. I do not mean that you have neglected your devotions before, but that the flame may be made to burn more brightly upon the altar of the heart, and be more steady and unfluctuating.

Prayer is the only life of the soul. The *spirit* of prayer is the gift of God.

There is a wide difference between *saying* our prayers, and real, heartfelt devotion. A parrot was once presented to the pope of Rome, which could repeat with marvelous accuracy the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

It is greatly to be feared that the devotions of Christians are too often quite as much a matter of rote and form as the mutterings of this gay and foolish bird. One reason for this is, because the time of prayer is put off to the latest moment of the day, and crowded into the smallest possible space. We might certainly afford a little more time for the proper discharge of so important a duty.

The fact that people are harassed by business, and find it difficult to command an hour for retirement and devotion, only renders it the more necessary for them to consecrate such a season to God.

For these reasons, we ought to watch very narrowly and jealously, lest, through coldness or neglect, we lose the benefit of our prayers.

Do not be satisfied with the idle and irreverent habit of hurrying over with your devotions, after you have retired to bed. No matter how many curious eyes may be fixed upon you, be not ashamed to kneel humbly on your knees, night and morning, and pour out your hearts before God, making known your requests to Him.

III. Another thing which the newly confirmed may be supposed to lack, is a due appreciation of the fact that *God has appointed them a work to do*. "The Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servant, and to every man his work." St. Mark xiii. 34.

How solemn the reflection! This is our Saviour's own representation of the case. To every person who has enlisted under the banner of the Cross *there is appointed a work*. And this is what we might reasonably have expected. The Almighty works by the use of *means*, and He employs His people for agents in spreading abroad the glory of His name, and in the building up of His kingdom.

I most earnestly hope that each person who has been recently enroled among the soldiers of Christ, will enter now, with hearty zeal, upon his life-long work and warfare. You can show yourselves to be better parents and children, brothers and sisters, and friends and neighbors, than ever before. You can lend good books and tracts, and teach in the Sunday school, and help the poor, and nurse the sick, and thus be coworkers together with God.

IV. Those who have lately taken upon themselves the vows of God, may also be said to lack *patience*.

In our ordinary dealings with the world, this virtue is greatly needed. It is, however, quite *indispensable* in our character as the followers of the Lord Jesus.

Slanders and falsehoods are circulated about every

devoted minister of God, which, as a man of the world, he might resent with a blow; but these things must be borne in uncomplaining silence. For our comfort we may remember the example which has been set us by that blessed MASTER, "who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself."

If the *leaders* of the host suffer thus, *private Christians* may expect their full share of trial. What said the Apostle? "*All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*" 2 Tim. iii. 12.

The more you love your church, the more grating and galling will it be to your feelings to hear her misrepresented and abused; but "in patience possess ye your souls."

Make yourselves intelligent churchmen; and while you ought to avoid a spirit of controversy, you can be prepared for any assault; and, with truth on your side, you may feel certain of victory.

V. Once more. It may readily be supposed that those who have only *begun* the Christian life, by the open stand which they took at Confirmation, may be required to be incited to *perseverance*.

We are told to be continually going forward. There must be no stopping, nor turning back. Religion consists not in *excitement*, but in *action*.

If day by day we can discover in ourselves some little token for good, however small, which we had not observed before; if we are more meek and forgiving, more considerate and unselfish, more steadfast

and devoted, then may we have confidence toward God.

“ Mere human energy shall faint,  
And youthful vigor cease ;  
But those who wait upon the Lord,  
In strength shall still increase.

“ They, with unwearied step, shall tread,  
The path of life divine ;  
With growing ardor onward move,  
With growing brightness shine.”

Does any one who neglected to be confirmed at the late visitation of the bishop, ask himself, in the words of the text, “ What lack I yet ?” *Every thing*. I will not deceive you. While you despise Baptism, and Confirmation, and the Lord's Supper, you are rejecting God's appointed means of grace ; and although these could not *save* you, they would help you forward in the right way, which leadeth to eternal life.

I pray God that He will mercifully spare you long enough to embrace the privileges which, for this season, you have lost.

## SERMON XVIII.

### THE TIMID ENCOURAGED TO COMMUNE.

And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot.—  
ST. JOHN xiii. 26.

I HARDLY know how to account for the backwardness which many persons manifest about receiving the Lord's Supper. If God had actually threatened that all who venture to partake of it, without being perfectly good, and pure, and holy, should instantly drop down dead, they could not well be more timid and reluctant.

Now, I honestly think that every one who has been baptized and confirmed, and who earnestly desires, by the help of God's grace, to lead a new life, is doing his soul a great wrong if he does not commune, and that, too, as often as the opportunity is afforded him.

You may think, perhaps, that this is taking a very low view of the subject; but I insist, nevertheless, that it is the true one, and that so far from detracting from the sacred character of the Lord's Supper, it exalts it to its proper place, as a means of grace and medicine for our souls.

I am free to confess that I shall use my best en-

deavors in this sermon to persuade those well-disposed persons who have been waiting months and years, in order to correct every evil habit, and to become good enough to commune, that they ought to come forward *now*; and that one great secret why they are so deficient in many respects, is simply because they have thus shamefully neglected a most important help, which God has provided for them.

Go back with me, in imagination, to Jerusalem, and see who they were that received the Holy Communion upon the first occasion of its celebration, and when our Saviour himself presided, in person, at the feast.

It was on Thursday night, the eve of the crucifixion. According to a previous arrangement, the twelve disciples met their Master in a room of the city, which had been suitably prepared for the observance of the Passover.

And when this ancient Jewish ceremonial was ended, Jesus took the bread and wine which were upon the table, and with these simple emblems instituted the Lord's Supper: the bread broken to remind all who should afterward receive it of His body, bruised upon the cross, and the wine poured out, of His precious blood. And we, this day, now that well-nigh nineteen hundred years have rolled away, are about to celebrate the same commemorative sacrifice of His body and blood, and to "do this" in remembrance of our Saviour's death and our Saviour's tender love.



"This is all reasonable and right," more than one timid person will be ready to say, "but, really, we are not fit to approach the Lord's table."

My friends, although we ought to watch ourselves closely, and to bring to light our darling sins, we have no right to condemn ourselves when God would not condemn us.

If you are sorry for your past misdoings, and have a thankful remembrance of the Saviour's death, I urge you to partake of the Lord's Supper, and I do it because I know what persons HE allowed to receive it at the first.

Look in again upon that humble chamber in Jerusalem. Whom do you see eating of the bread of life, and drinking the cup of salvation, which Jesus himself has blessed? Are they not all men of like passions with ourselves?

There are James and John, who, in their hasty zeal, would fain have called down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans, because of their bigotry and forgetfulness of the ordinary courtesies of life. Yes, James and John are receiving the Supper of the Lord, the feast of Christian love.

And there is Thomas—doubting Thomas—so slow of heart to believe. There too is Peter, partaking of the same heavenly feast: Peter, who only a few hours afterward, would curse and swear, and cowardly deny his Lord

There again, the Master is seen passing the bread

and the cup to Andrew, and Philip, and Matthew, and Bartholomew, and the other James, who reverently partake, but who, when dangers and death encompassed Him about, all forsook Him and fled.

And look once more. There, too, is Judas! We can scarcely believe our eyes; but the Saviour does not even pass *him* by, although he was at the very moment nursing base treachery in his heart; and that same night he fulfilled his murderous purpose, and "betrayed the innocent blood."

Now I ask what right has any one to declare that the Lord's Supper is something so sacred and awful, that none but perfectly good people must venture to receive it, when our Saviour himself admitted such characters as these to the table which His goodness had spread?

What reason is there in the plea which is so often urged by sober and well-meaning people, that they are afraid to commune, because they have done so many wrong things in times past, or because they are apprehensive lest they may be led into evil in the future?

Are they more uncharitable and vindictive by nature than James and John? Have they more serious and perplexing doubts than Thomas? Do they run a greater risk of apostacy than Peter?

When I see men and women, who ought to be regular in their attendance at the Lord's table, holding back, month after month, and going out of church be-

fore the Holy Communion is celebrated, as if the Saviour had never been crucified for them, and never had commanded them thus to commemorate His precious death, and all upon the ground of unworthiness; when, too, I hear the scoffer and the scorner speaking lightly of some who *do* obey the dying direction of their Lord, and insist that they ought not to be permitted to commune, I cannot persuade myself that such persons ever read the New Testament account of the first communion, or pondered over the verse where it is written that even *Judas* was allowed to partake.

Besides the general reluctance which so many manifest in regard to receiving the Lord's Supper, we generally find them ready to meet our exhortations with a variety of reasons, which they persuade themselves to be perfectly convincing. One will say: "I am too great a sinner to commune."

You forget, my friend, that our Saviour came, "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."—"They that be whole need not a physician, but they that be sick."

No matter how grievous an offender you have been, if now you are ashamed and sorry for your sins, God is more than willing to pardon you.

Another will object that he is penitent, and that he *does* desire to lead a new and better life, but that he feels so little confidence in himself, that he is afraid of a sudden and mortifying relapse into his evil ways.

Now, if you are not really sincere in this expression of your desire to serve God; if you are cherishing any secret intention of going back again to forbidden indulgences; if, in short, you are merely making an *experiment* how a religious life will suit you, I must say that you are not a fit person to commune.

But if your difficulty is in truth a distrust of your own *strength*, while your *purposes* are honest and pure, I bid you, in God's name, come to His altar, and receive the Holy Communion to the comfort of your fainting soul.

A third will acknowledge, if you press him very closely upon the subject, that he stays away from the Lord's table because some are in the habit of communing, in whose sincerity he has no confidence, or because he has had a misunderstanding or quarrel with them.

I beg that those who are hindered from doing their duty by such a reason, will remember the lesson connected with the text. The priests who blessed the Passover of which our Lord himself partook, were even then plotting his death. He also knew that Judas had been bribed to betray him, and yet He gave the consecrated elements to him. How clearly does this prove that no personal unworthiness on the part of *others* can excuse *us* from the performance of our duty.

Again. Others neglect the Holy Communion because they think that they are too young to receive it.

In European countries, all are accustomed to commune from an early age. This practice is only a continuation of that of the Jewish church, in which children were allowed to partake of the Passover at the age of twelve years.

Certainly, when fourteen or fifteen years old, they are fully capable of understanding all that is requisite concerning the nature and design of the Lord's Supper, and their obligations to serve and please HIM who purchased their redemption with His own blood.

The solemnities of the Holy Sacrament do not interfere with the becoming cheerfulness of youth; and indeed none have so good a right to be happy as the teachable and the obedient.

And now, my friends, can you consent, for any paltry plea, to stay away from the Holy Supper of the Lord?

Suppose that the Saviour had commanded His ministers, at stated intervals, (once a month or oftener), to unfurl a banner in the church, with a cross emblazoned upon it, and invite all those who were not ashamed to recognize HIM as their king, and who trusted to His atonement to save them, to stand up around it, and renew their oath of allegiance to Him; and that such as wished to be considered as His enemies, and who preferred to depend upon some other mode of salvation, should leave the temple. How many of you would go out? Would you not *all*

flock around the standard, and glory in being soldiers of Christ?

Now, the only difference between the real state of things and the case I have supposed, is this: instead of directing that a flag should be unfurled, our Saviour has instituted a much more striking and affecting ceremony. He tells us reverently to partake of the consecrated bread and wine, in remembrance of His body and blood offered for us upon the cross, and He promises that such a participation shall be strengthening and refreshing to our souls.

And is this any thing so terrible? Should this fill us with dismay? Ought the uncovering of the Master's table, and His gracious invitation for all to draw near in faith, to be regarded as a signal for beating a speedy retreat, and retiring in hot haste from His presence?

He who overlooked Peter's denial, and did not banish Judas from the feast, will not be strict to mark *our* imperfections, if we come as humble penitents, seeking for His grace and benediction.

## SERMON XIX.

### STEADFASTNESS IN THE MIDST OF DANGERS.

We will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.—DANIEL iii. 18.

THE plain of Dura. Within this wide and ample space, the temple of Belus reared its lofty head. The countless multitudes who peopled mighty Babylon might be seen flocking to the sacred inclosure, to witness a gorgeous ceremonial in honor of their idol vanities. Nebuchadnezzar had made a golden image, and assembled the officers of the empire, and proclaimed, by a herald, that at the sound of music, all should fall down and adore it, on penalty of being cast into a burning fiery furnace.

The appointed signal was given. Tributary princes and obedient subjects from every province of his wide-spread dominions, prostrated themselves, as one man, to worship the senseless idol, which besotted ignorance and vain-glorious self-conceit had ventured to contrive.

But who are those three young men who are standing up at such a time, and in open defiance of the king?

Loud complaint is brought at once, and they are summoned before the throne. Nebuchadnezzar regards them with unmingled astonishment and rage.

Poor, captive, despised Jews! their merits had raised them to office and influence in a land of strangers. How, then, could they venture to refuse compliance with the word of him who had lifted them from the dust, and whose frown was instant death?

They have no apologies to make. They choose rather to put themselves in God's safe hands, persisting in the right.

The fiery furnace blazed and burned with seven times its wonted heat. The steadfast and determined Jews neither feared nor flinched. Offers of pardon again were made. Again the flat refusal was returned: "We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

The infuriated idolaters delay not a moment more. The despisers of their gods are cast into the devouring flames. God always watches over His people with anxious care. The gracious promise had been made of old as an encouragement to fainting hearts: "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Isaiah xliii. 2.

Meanwhile, Nebuchadnezzar sat in sullen silence, to see the end. Suddenly a look of terror flashed across his savage face, and rising in haste, he appealed to his councilors, and said: "Did not we cast *three*



men *bound* into the midst of the fire?" Being assured that this was even so, he pointed to the blazing furnace, crying out with ill-concealed amazement and alarm: "Lo, I see *four* men *loose*, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt: and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

At the king's command the three Hebrew youths came forth from the furnace unscorched; and in the presence of the whole astonished court, he gave glory to Israel's God.

The same scenes—differing simply in the lesser details—has more than once been witnessed upon the earth.

The whole world is one wide plain of Dura, in which a golden image is set up. The God of heaven proclaims His sovereign will. He scorns the petty homage of a divided heart. His glory He will not consent to share with any created thing. Rival divinities, in spite of this, set up their groundless claims. They all have their due proportion of abject worshipers.

I. *The man of the world* bows down before the golden image. He adores that which seems nearest to himself. Popularity, and power, and place are first and foremost in his thoughts. He makes an idol of the world. He may have shadowy and uncertain images of a purer and holier faith which have survived through long years of avaricious toil—the faint whisperings of a mother's early teachings; but nothing

is *real* in his sight which cannot be coined into money, and which will not aid him in his ambitious plans.

The persuasive voice of temptation has only to be heard, sounding aloud like the inspiring music which summoned the deluded multitude to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image; and the man of the world forgets that the Omniscient One is observing all he does. He may be often reminded of his duty, but he hearkens only to forget. He cannot bring himself to look beyond the interests of the passing hour. He gazes with astonishment on those, who, while exposed to the same allurements with himself, have the firmness and fortitude to say: "We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

II. The *Christian* has full scope for the exercise of the determined spirit manifested by the Hebrew youths, in a consistent walk with God.

We talk of days of persecution, of the dark ages, and of times and circumstances long past, as though times and circumstances had wholly changed.

Some who read this history of the fiery furnace, and the martyrs who endured its burnings, consider such trials as forever past. And so, we trust, they are, thank God, in this particular shape. But has not St. Paul prepared us for hardships, and crosses, and misrepresentations, and revilings, by the broad and unqualified declaration: "*All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution*"?

A person who has the conscience to make religion a mere matter of taste and convenience, and who will degrade himself so far as to twist and turn to suit the popular current, need not fear of being disturbed.

Such a man may be *called* a Christian, and even fancy that he is quite a consistent one, but he is deceiving his own heart.

You may rest assured, if you are what you ought to be, no degree of prudence and reserve will free you altogether from the opposition and malice of an ungodly world. "Many winter blasts," says good Bishop Leighton, whose sweet and blameless life was checkered with sorrows multiplied, "will meet you in the most inoffensive way of religion, if you keep straight on in suffering; and war with the world is a part of the godly man's portion."

It seems, at first thought, a hard lot; but it has its blessings. Who would not be willing to bear his troubles patiently, when he hears the Saviour's consoling words: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. In Me, ye shall have peace."

It is certainly very foolish in any one to expose himself, without cause, to the opposition of the wicked, and to try to make a martyr of himself, by being obstinate and unyielding, when occasion does not call for it. There will be opportunities enough for showing the strength of his faith, without going out of the

way to find them. They will come, sooner or later, as a thing of course.

A very common mode in which good people are required to put their steadfastness to the test, is when they find themselves in a place where the church is feeble and in ill-repute. Worldly policy, the fear of giving offense, and other motives equally powerful with unstable souls, will present themselves in formidable array. Very likely there will be a severe struggle between interest and duty, the devil suggesting, in his plausible form of speech, that popularity should be looked after *first*.

The individual who, under such circumstances, will shut his eyes to all the probabilities of failure in case he should persist in doing right, and to the fair prospect of success should he obtain his own consent to do wrong, not stopping to inquire whether or not those against him may not be as countless as the image-worshippers at Babylon, and those with him as few and helpless as the victims who were cast into the furnace, but shall take his Prayer Book and stand up among God's people, and say, in the language of the Creed: "I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins." Such a person, if placed under the same circumstances of trial as the Hebrew youths, would be sure to join in their positive refusal to yield one inch of the truth. He would be ready, like them,

bravely to declare: "We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Among the apocryphal books of Scripture is one entitled, "The Song of the Three Holy Children." It is found in the early Greek and Latin versions of the Bible, though not in the Hebrew, and is said to have been sung by the devout Jews while enduring the trial of their faith in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace.

The hymn was long used in the Jewish church, and, in its main features, still forms a part of public worship in the Christian Church. It is a close paraphrase of the 148th Psalm. We know this "Song of the Three Holy Children," under the name of the "Benedicite." It is frequently used during Lent, instead of the *Te Deum*, because this long fasting season is one of our times of trial. This old hymn thus serves to link the present with the past, and to remind us that while the *sufferings* of the faithful will, in all times, be more or less the same, the *ground of consolation* is one.

The expression which Nebuchadnezzar employed, when he saw the flames had no power over the victims of his wrath, is somewhat remarkable. "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire: and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Whether the title, "Son of God," has reference to an angelic spirit, or to HIM who can claim in the highest sense to be "the Son of God," the conclusion

is equally consoling. In the midst of their trials and afflictions, God is present with His people.

If *Nebuchadnezzar* saw the Son of God, when engaged in persecuting the faithful; so, too, did *Saul*.

When the whole creation is wrapt in flames, and the world becomes one great fiery furnace, the true servants of God shall escape unhurt. From the midst of universal ruin, they shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and evermore abide with Him in glory.

My friends, do you desire that this may be *your* portion? You have only to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, to remain steadfast in the faith; and, upon every occasion of temptation and trial, to say to the worldly vanity which would gladly seek to wean your hearts from the service of its rightful Lord: "We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

## SERMON XX.

### THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS INFLUENCE OVER OTHERS.

We are verily guilty concerning our brother.—GENESIS xlii. 21.

THE language of self-reproach, which sharp compunction wrung from Jacob's sons, may well be adopted by many among ourselves.

Take the most favorable case you can. Grant that you have done no positive harm to others. Have you not, too often, forgotten to do them good?

Each one leaves his mark upon the world. It rests with ourselves whether this influence shall be for good or for evil.

Some, with no more natural abilities, and no better opportunities than their neighbors, render all with whom they come in contact, wiser, holier, and happier. Others, possessing the same powers of mind, and surrounded by the same circumstances, stand like a moral Upas, rendering the very atmosphere about them unwholesome and deadly.

The great mass of mankind are more or less selfish. God desires and directs that we may be otherwise. He has placed us here in a sphere of usefulness.

Within our immediate circle, be it large or small, we may always find work enough.

But, alas! how many who *ought* to improve a privilege so great, are, by inactivity and gross neglect, preparing for themselves seasons of sorrow in the future, when they will cry out, in agony of soul, knowing it is then too late to offer advice or aid to one who has become hopelessly hardened in sin, but whom, at an earlier period in his career, they possessed influence enough to save: "*We are verily guilty concerning our brother.*"

The wicked might kindly have been warned; the ignorant might easily have been taught; the headstrong might have been moved by expostulation and love; the poor might have been effectually relieved.

*Selfishness* is the true secret of such unwarrantable neglect. We are disposed to think too much of our ease. We are altogether too sensitive about going out of our social sphere. The warnings, and instructions, and expostulations, and tokens of interest, of which I speak, might all be brought to bear upon the cases of those in our neighborhood, without the least compromise of self-respect or prudence on our part, and with no risk of exciting surprise or displeasure on theirs.

Then, as to acts of benevolence, no difficulty of the kind need be feared. Excuse our hardness of heart upon what ground we may, truth must oblige us to confess that it is nothing but selfishness and parsi-



mony, at the last. Although many kind actions are certainly done, yet the selfishness of the unrenewed heart, if left without counter influences, of various sorts, would be shown at all times and under all circumstances. That was a fine conceit of an old artist, which painted an alms-chest covered with cobwebs, as a symbol of charity!

The Christian is set as a *light* in the world. But let him look back with impartial eyes upon his past life, and see how comparatively unprofitable it has been. He has had it in his power to *say* or *do* something every day, for the benefit of perishing sinners; and yet he has either forgotten the obligation, or indolence, and pride, and covetousness, have placed stumbling-blocks in the way, and hindered his purposes of well-doing.

Now, dismal and disheartening as such a retrospect must certainly be, we shall continue to go on in quite as unprofitable a course, unless some unusual effort be made to do better.

Christians should not be contented with being in the right road themselves, but they should feel a lively interest in the welfare of others. Single-handed and alone, they may not always be able to accomplish what they desire. Then it is that they should consult and act in concert with others.

They must get over the reluctance which so many good people manifest to take a decided course which

may commit them, before the eyes of the world, as the servants of God.

This backwardness is owing, in a great measure, perhaps, to the disgust which they have felt at the ebullitions of ignorant fanaticism and misguided zeal.

The prophet, however, certainly describes a sound and healthy condition of the public mind in regard to religion, when he says: "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name." Malachi iii. 16. And again, in the Psalms: "Thy saints shall bless Thee, O Lord, they shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts and the glorious majesty of His kingdom." Ps. cxlv. 10-12.

I do not mean that such intercourse between Christian people should consist in pious sentimentality, but in sensible, encouraging, and instructive converse, which may "provoke unto love and to good works."

The Church of God is too seldom the subject of our thoughts. It is too little spoken of, too little labored for. Men who would gladly talk for an hour at a time, to convince another that his *political* opinions were wrong, will let him go down to his grave in doubt and darkness in reference to his undying soul.

It fills one with indignation to see members of that Church which has CHRIST for its Founder and Head,

that Church which saw the beginning of all the governments upon earth, and which was alive and vigorous "when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, when idols were still worshiped in the temple of Mecca," that Church upon whose wide-spread greatness the sun never goes down, I say it fills one with indignation to see the members of this universal kingdom of God sitting mute and unresisting, while her claims are ruthlessly assailed, and her honor trampled in the dust.

I am no friend to the unnecessary and offensive bringing forward of these topics upon all occasions; but the Christian who is too careless or too indolent to inform himself about such things, and too weak-spirited to open his lips when the fitting opportunity does arise for convincing another of his untenable and dangerous position, may live to give utterance to the unavailing regret, after his friend has been drawn away into some grievous form of error: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother."

But this great and glorious work may be sympathized in, and shared by those who have not the education to enable them to summon Church history and argument to their aid, when the cause of Christ is evil spoken of, and the enemy comes in like a flood. *May be*, did I say? *must be* would be nearer the truth. God will hold all who profess to be His servants to a strict account for what they might have

been able to accomplish in the way of turning the minds of others to the truth.

Christians are responsible for their *example*. They are "the salt of the earth." They are "the leaven," which must leaven the whole lump. Their example in their families, in private intercourse with friends, and in their regular occupation, should be safe and consistent. *Christian principle* should be discovered in every thing. And if this rule applies to every-day affairs, how much more weight does it carry when we think of higher duties. A Christian careless about prayer! A Christian irregular at Church! A Christian willing to make the rash experiment whether or not his soul can live without the spiritual food provided for it in the Lord's Supper! A Christian thinking more of being well settled in this world than of securing a title to a heavenly inheritance!

Is it any wonder that the ungodly mock? Can we be surprised that unbelievers multiply? Is it astonishing that such a reckless disregard of ordinary duties, and such a strange forgetfulness of the importance of setting a good example, should draw a long train of calamities in the wake of inconsistent Christians, and cause them, in the hour of sickness and death, to cry out, at the remembrance of a brother, or husband, or child, or friend, shipwrecked and ruined by their neglect: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother"?

Christians are also *responsible for personal efforts to benefit others.*

The sense of such an accountability will be shown in daily prayers in behalf of the thoughtless and unconcerned, by kind, prudent, well-timed conversation, and by generous contributions of money to sustain and spread the Church of God.

Christians cannot be too active, and devoted, and zealous in so great and glorious a work.

The members of their own households claim the first share in their attention. Children and servants should be made to attend public worship; and those who have passed the years of childhood, and who consider themselves as men and women, though still sheltered beneath the paternal roof, ought constantly to be exhorted to pay due regard to the requirements of the Gospel; and no long-continued stubbornness and disobedience, and no degree of deadness and unconcern, should palsy such efforts, or lead them to give up in despair.

From the narrow circle of family influence let your efforts be directed abroad, and let relatives, and neighbors, and friends, have no cause to reproach you at the last, with the harrowing and terrible accusation that you never took the least trouble to show them that you considered their crooked and perverse ways to be either wrong or dangerous.

Would you stand by quietly and see a person step into a little leaky boat, which, to his blurred and

blinded vision seemed safe and sound, and push off from the land upon the stormy, troubled waters, without telling him of his danger? Should his life be lost for want of such a warning, would not your mind be afterward distressed and disturbed, nay, would not conscience goad you almost to distraction? and in the still hour of midnight, when deep sleep falleth upon men, would you not start up in terror, from feverish dreams, imagining that you saw again the swelling billows and the shattered bark, and heard the agonizing death-wail?

And yet, my friends, what would such a calamity be, compared with that which may now be ready to overtake you; some one, over whose eternal destiny you have influence and control, venturing upon the dangerous ocean of life, and you neglecting, by example, by prayer, by daily counsel and exhortation, to render the voyage certain and safe; you, wrapped up in business, or occupied wholly by domestic cares, and regardless of the hour when the piercing shrieks of lost souls shall fill your minds with dismay, and call forth the bitter and unavailing regret: "*We are verily guilty concerning our brother.*"

## SERMON XXI.

### THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN'S MISSION.

All the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.—Acts ix. 39.

A LIFE of usefulness must always be a happy one. It will, of course, have its hours of sadness and gloom; but these will be comparatively few.

The little picture presented in the text, is one well calculated to touch the heart. An active, humble-minded Christian woman at Joppa, had fallen sick and died. Sorrowing and sympathizing friends prepared her body for the burial, and laid it in an upper room. Messages were sent in haste to Lydda, a distance of fifteen miles, to summon Peter to their aid. He came at once, and entering the chamber of death, found himself in the midst of those who had so much reason to lament their loss. "And all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them."

The quaint Burkitt very justly observes, that "The best relics of the saints that can remain in honor of

them when departed, are acts of piety toward God, and of charity to the poor."

The sequel of this story you can read for yourselves. Let us endeavor now to improve the part which has been already given. The text affords a striking example of quiet, unobtrusive usefulness, which it is by no means difficult to imitate.

It needs no organization into a society or band. It has occasion for no officers and books of record. It forms the nucleus of no company of gossips, for collecting and retailing news. Its deeds are not paraded in the public prints, that all the world may read. It is the example of a Christian woman, fulfilling, as best she can, the will and commandments of her Lord. It is a specimen of true charity, stripped of all those disguises in which modern extravagance is fond of seeing her arrayed. Like the great laws of Nature, this heavenly grace of charity performs its allotted work in silence, looking forward to a better world for its everlasting reward.

And what a large share of labor is done by Christian women! How long they have taken the lead in every good word and work! From the beginning of the Christian Church, they have formed a very considerable majority of its members, and have always been most zealous in its cause.

They constitute one vast benevolent society, whose history reaches back to those early days when Mary brake the box of spikenard, and poured it on the Sa-



viour's feet, and others, moved by a like affection, "prepared spices and ointments" to embalm His body after the Crucifixion.

The annals of the Church, in all ages, furnish one continuous record of the faith, the devotion, the self-sacrifice of woman. She has ever been the kind foster-parent of the orphan. She has tenderly nursed the sick. She has soothed the afflicted by her heartfelt sympathies. She has attracted the little ones to Sunday School and church. She has been the clergyman's best earthly assistant, in every time of need.

But you must not suppose that *all* Christian females are thus usefully employed—thus ready to do, and dare, and suffer. Had this been the case, I should not have felt it my duty to have referred to the subject here.

It is because many are remiss, and backward, and weak in faith, that I have shown what women *have* done, that others may be incited by such examples to imitate their labors of love.

But there must first be found *a willing mind*, before we can hope for any thing like activity and zeal. Habits of industry must be formed. No matter how easy your worldly circumstances may be, no one is rich enough to be idle.

"Who can find a virtuous woman? (says the wise man) for her price is far above rubies. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

Solomon is not speaking of the character which becomes a person in humble life alone. He is delineating the qualities of a woman of rank, and his description is given for the purpose of aiding a king in his choice of a suitable wife.

But while industry thus exerts itself at *home*, it should not confine its operations to these narrow limits.

Some excellent persons are so short-sighted, that they think their obligations are all discharged when domestic arrangements are kept in a proper train. They forget that the Master whom they serve has other duties, which should oftentimes direct their steps abroad.

I. There are poor and sick to be visited and relieved. Females can, in most cases, perform such offices far better than men. And yet how many are allowing this talent to be unimproved!

I do not wish to be understood as teaching that every Christian woman is required to forsake her home, and go forth upon such an errand as that which has rendered the name of Florence Nightingale so fragrant throughout the world. But all who have the disposition, can find an ample field of usefulness, without quitting their own immediate neighborhood. Some, however, are quite as ignorant of the wants of the poor in the parish, as if they lived beyond the seas.

They imagine that their part has been most fully done when they have contributed a trifle to the alms on Communion days.

Others have begun so late in life to redeem their misspent time, that they give up in despair, when they find this work of charity so different from what they thought. The *reality* is frequently very unlike the picture which *fancy* paints. "If we have drawn romantic notions of misfortune, and annexed to it the ideas of venerable, simple, docile, and grateful, we shall soon become disgusted with the practice of charity, and fly back to the reveries of speculative benevolence, as an asylum from the disappointments we meet with in the world, as it is really constituted."\*

But even allowing that our ardor may be chilled in the manner just described, we have no right to stay our hand, or stop our work. Is there no reason to fear that *we* may be numbered among the ungrateful children of that Father in Heaven who is "kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil"?

The duty in question is not always pleasant, but this is no excuse for its neglect. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." St. James i. 27.

\* Sydney Smith's Sermons.

II. Another branch of Christian duty, where female energy is called for, is the Sunday School.

I shall indulge in no strain of eulogy upon this auxiliary of the church. It is enough to say that it is an institution excellent in its design, and capable of accomplishing much lasting good. I refer not so much to the kind of lessons taught, and the number of verses learned, but to the habit of punctuality and attention which children thus gradually acquire—the habit of gathering together at the best and safest place on earth, the church—the habit of acknowledging an inferiority in age and learning to those who come to teach—the habit, with lisping and artless tongue, of repeating the Name, the Works, the Faith of Him whom, in after years, they will thus be fitted to worship and adore.

Nor is it the *pupils* alone who are benefited in this way. The *instructors* cannot fail to derive profit from it. Oftentimes, truths which have been read in books, and listened to in sermons, and which have left no perceptible impression before, will touch the heart, while, perhaps, in a mechanical and careless way, they may be endeavoring to impart them to others.

Thus it happens that teachers in the Sunday School are arrested by some thought presented in the lesson, and ask themselves the anxious question, "*Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?*"

But it is too late in the day to be looking after arguments to prove the beneficial effects of Sunday

Schools. No one doubts the fact. My object now is to excite more interest in this behalf. All who can, should give their time and influence as teachers. You should not be content to hurry through with the appointed task, and think no more of your responsibility until Sunday returns again. The children should be visited at their homes. They should be encouraged to be regular at church. They should be taught to love it. Those who live too far off to act as teachers, or whose health or domestic cares prevent them from taking part in this work, should consider it their duty to provide the needful books.

III. A third way in which Christian females especially may render themselves most useful to the church, is by acting as sponsors for the young. Some are disposed to decline this office, on account of its responsibility. But suppose that *all* should do so—how could God's work be done? It often happens, from peculiar circumstances, that females make better sponsors than men; and they should be thankful that so wide a field of usefulness is thus opened before them. Their faithful and persevering labors will ultimately be crowned with success.

I have now pointed out some of the more prominent ways in which Christian women may, without losing sight for a moment of the modesty and unobtrusiveness which become their sex, do much for the advancement of God's glory. All such acts of kindness done

to Christ's poor and His little ones, will be rewarded as though done unto Him.

It is the custom of our times to build, over the graves of the departed, conspicuous monuments, covered with eulogiums upon those whose bones are crumbling beneath.

"*To lie like an epitaph*" has passed into a proverb—and one for which there is too much ground in truth.

My friends, let it be your endeavor to leave behind the memory of a well-spent life, which shall require no such worthless remembrances.

Better far than all outward tokens of respect are the sincere and heartfelt sorrowings of those who realize that they have lost a friend.

No Christian woman could desire a more glorious memorial than that recorded in the text—a memorial of usefulness, kindness, and love: "All the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them."

## SERMON XXII.

### THE DUTY OF FASTING.—AN EXHORTATION FOR LENT

I humbled my soul with fasting.—PSALM xxxv. 13.

So said David. All God's faithful children, under every dispensation, have observed the same rule. So must each one now say, who hopes for the highest degree of blessedness hereafter.

"Can none, then, be saved without fasting?" I have heard people sometimes ask. This question might be answered by another: "Can any be saved without praying?" Those who are so perfect as to stand in no need of *prayer*, may most properly neglect the *fasts*. The one duty is as binding upon us as the other. The *same authority* has commanded the observance of both; the same prominence is given to both throughout every part of God's word; and the same spirit of obedience which leads Christians to perform any duty, should influence them in the careful discharge of these.

The Old Testament is full of examples, showing that fasting was practiced by the Jews in their individual and national capacity, and that this means of testifying sorrow for sin, and seeking for the Divine blessing, was never resorted to in vain. David fasted

and prayed when he had so grievously sinned against Uriah. Ahab fasted when the judgments of God were denounced against him by Elijah. The Ninevites fasted upon the preaching of Jonah. Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast throughout Judah, when the combined forces of Ammon and Moab were invading the land. And in all these instances, the fact is recorded with incontestible marks of Divine approbation. David's dreadful wickedness was pardoned. Nineveh was spared. Jehoshaphat was victorious. And even wicked Ahab, whose repentance was by no means sincere, gained a delay of the sentence which had been justly denounced against him.

But fasting is an *unpleasant* duty; and those who wish to escape from it, while they readily grant that it was practiced by the Jews, deny that it is binding upon Christians. Is this true? Did not our blessed Lord himself fast forty days and forty nights, thus setting us an example of subduing the flesh to the Spirit, that in this way His "godly monitions" may be more perfectly obeyed? Do not the Apostle tell us that they were "in fastings often"? Do they not enjoin it upon Christians to "give themselves to fasting and prayer"?

"This may all be true," answers an objector, "but why not leave it to each one to discharge this duty when he feels disposed, and why celebrate the fast of Lent, which sprung up, perhaps, during the dark ages of the world?"



In reply to the first question, I would merely say that if we wait until we feel in a *humor to fast*, we shall never fast at all. Hence the wisdom of the Church in appointing *stated seasons* for it, when we are *bound* to attend to it, or prove ourselves unworthy and disobedient children.

As to the assertion in regard to the *origin of the Lenten fast*, no one can make it without betraying a degree of ignorance of which professing Christians should be ashamed to be guilty.

Our Saviour said to His disciples: "The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from you, and then shall ye fast." St. Matt. ix. 15.

We are told by very ancient writers, that after Christ's crucifixion, the Apostles fixed upon this season as a fast; and although it is probable that the precise number of days which we now keep was not determined until a few years later, still, of all the essential features of the Lenten fast, it may be said:

"Not now, nor yesterday, but always thus  
These have endured."

In the 61st of the Apostolic Canons it is declared: "If any Bishop, Priest, Deacon, Reader, or Singer, do not keep the Holy Fast of Lent, forty days before Easter, on the Wednesdays and Fridays, let him be deposed, if he be not hindered by some bodily infirmity; but if he be a layman, let him be suspended from Communion."

The antiquity of this fast may also be seen from a letter written by the emperor Constantine, to the bishops comprising the Council of Nice, which met A. D. 325. Speaking of the necessity of observing uniformity in the celebration of Easter, by which Lent is concluded, he remarks: "It is fit, therefore, that we should perpetuate to all future ages the celebration of this rite *which we have kept from the first day of our Lord's Passion even to the present times.*"

In order to show the *universality* of this observance of Lent, I need only quote St. Basil's words: "In this time of Lent," he says, "there is no island nor continent of the earth, no city nor nation, no extreme corner of the world, where the edict of this fast of Lent was not heard. Yea, whatsoever armies, merchants, travelers, or mariners are abroad, this fast comes unto them all, and with joy they all receive it. This composes every house, every city, and every people in society, and quiet, and concord. This stills the late clamors, contentions, and noises of the town. Let no one, therefore, exempt himself from the number of fasts, in which every degree, nation, and age almost, of men, and all of all dignities whatsoever, are engaged."

You perceive, then, that those who refuse to *fast*, are disobeying one of the plainest duties of the Christian; and those who neglect the *fast of Lent*, are setting at nought a rule which has been observed by the whole Church in every land since the days of the Apostles.

It certainly is a question of great moment whether the leaving undone so important and so clear a duty can be *safely* persisted in. There is no reason nor excuse why such a risk should be run. "Some" observes the quaint but straightforward, truth-telling Dr. South, "some, who would be reforming while they should be obeying, who are too holy to need fasting, have too much of the Spirit to stand in fear of the flesh, and who still express God's mercies by 'marrow and fatness,' and such other expressions as please their palate and leave a relish upon the tongue that speaks them, these will hear of nothing but of liberty. They must have elbow-room at their meat, and as for Lent they defy it; it is popish, anti-christian, and idolatrous."

Woe, woe be to him who thus trifles with his Maker, and in the very midst of light and knowledge, makes shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. They profess to be anxious to "live godly in Christ Jesus," but it must be in *their own way*. They will not be restrained and kept in by fixed rules.

And this is the true secret why so many go on heavily and sluggishly in the path of obedience. This is the reason why so many "perish from the right way," and sink down "into the pit of destruction."

The provision made by the Church in her yearly round of festivals and fasts, is exactly what our nature needs; and there is no shorter way of arriving at the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

If we desire really to enjoy the days of happiness, we must be content to humble ourselves in the season of humiliation. None rejoice in Easter-tide less than those who have not fasted and mourned in Lent.

But while it is expected of all to keep the fasts of the Church, all cannot observe them alike.

The sick, or such as are just recovering their health, may not be able, perhaps, to abstain from food; and they who are obliged to toil hard for their daily bread, require more to sustain their strength than those whose lives are less active. But all should deny themselves in some way.

If unable to conform to the customs of the Church by a *bodily fast* at this time, let them be as economical as possible, and contribute the money thus saved toward the Easter offerings for missions and for the relief of the poor.

Our external behavior should also correspond with the humiliation and seriousness which we profess.

Amusements which are lawful and proper enough at other times, are not so in Lent. By attending to these rules, we shall, like St. Paul, be keeping under the body, and bringing it into subjection "to the Spirit"; thus shall we gradually become "crucified unto the world, and the world unto us"; and by persevering in this course, we shall learn at last, with the same Apostle, to "take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake."

You will notice that I have made appointments for special services, to be held during this holy season. The hour is one which will interfere very little, if any, with your business. Every family can, as well as not, send *some* representatives.

If mud, or wet, or cold, can frighten us from our duty now, we may feel quite sure that, had we lived in earlier times, when the faith of Christians was tried by the terrors of martyrdom, we should have been among the cowardly multitude who purchased *bodily* safety and the good-will of heathen rulers by an open denial of their Lord.

Ours is not an age of persecution, with fire and fagot; but there is *no age* in which Christians are not expected to *deny themselves*. God does not try *us* so severely as He tried His people in other times; but day by day He is sifting and weighing and noting down our neglect of plain duties, and soon, very soon, He will call us to an account for it. Rest assured, my friends, you will never reach heaven by merely doing what pleases you, and what costs you no great effort to perform. We all have a cross to carry; and if you never yet have felt its weight upon your shoulders, the heavier it will be when God lays it upon you.

From the conduct of many Christians, it might readily be supposed that we who fast and meet often in the Church for prayer, are performing works of

supererogation—more and better services than God requires of us.

But oh, how far is this from being the case! Of the best it must be said: "We are unprofitable servants."

If we observe every appointed festival and fast, give liberally of our worldly substance, and "do all such good works as God has prepared for us to walk in," we have nothing to boast of; we merely show our cheerful obedience, and must still cling fast to the Cross of the Redeemer.

And how have those of you who are making light of these things, purchased a dispensation for your neglect?

Have you really made such advancement in holiness—have you gained such a mastery over the infirmities of the flesh—have you learned so faithfully to obey God's commandments, as to require less than we do, these helps which I have named for growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour?

However careful we may be in other ways to reform our lives and improve our hearts, I should exceedingly dread to be in the place of one on his dying bed, who, in reviewing his past life, could not say, as David did: "*I humbled my soul with fasting.*"

## SERMON XXIII.

### SICKNESS.

The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.—PSALM xli. 3.

No one who has not felt the pains of sickness can fully appreciate the blessing of health.

When the weak and wan sufferer is carried for the first time from the bed to an easy chair—when, a day or two after, he begins to move with unsteady steps across the chamber floor—when he ventures to stand in the door-way, and breathe again the fresh air of heaven—when he rides or walks abroad, recovering, by slow degrees, his wonted strength, how glad and grateful he ought to be!

The lassitude and sufferings of sickness are hard to bear; and yet it is a wholesome discipline, which all of us greatly need.

Such things do not come by chance. Those who would persuade you otherwise, are ready to deny that the Almighty exercises any influence or authority in His own world.

“Times of sickness, times of health,  
Blighting want and cheerful wealth,  
All our pleasures, all our pains,  
Come and end as God ordains.”

The design of sickness may be threefold. Sometimes it is sent to punish the wicked. Such was the case when God smote the Philistines with a sore disease for carrying away the Ark. 1 Sam. v. 6.

Sickness may be intended to try the patience and constancy of the righteous. We have examples of this in the lives of Job and Hezekiah.

Sickness may also be designed to show forth God's glory. It was so in the case of the man who was born blind, whose eyes our Saviour opened. St. John ix. 3. The sickness of Lazarus was likewise to this end. St. John xi. 4.

These several causes of sickness are well summed up in the tender exhortation which the Church addresses to her children in the hour of their suffering: "Dearly beloved, . . . whatsoever your sickness be, know you certainly that it is God's visitation. And for what cause soever this sickness be sent unto you; whether it be to try your patience for the example of others, and that your faith may be found in the day of the Lord, laudable, glorious, and honorable, to the increase of glory and endless felicity; or else it be sent unto you to correct and amend in you whatsoever doth offend the eyes of your Heavenly Father, know you certainly, that if you truly repent you of your sins, and bear your sickness patiently, trusting in God's mercy for His dear Son's sake, . . . it shall turn to your profit, and help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto everlasting life."



Blessed is he who so walks before God in the straight and peaceful paths of holy living; that, in the time of sickness, it can be said of him, in the comforting words of the text, "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: THOU wilt make all his bed in his sickness."

Sickness is one of the greatest trials of our mortal state. If the world could be quite free from this, most people might esteem themselves comparatively happy. But no panacea will ever be discovered to cure the many ills which flesh is heir to.

When the Saviour began his mission of mercy upon earth, His sovereign power was fully exercised day by day. We read that He went about through the land, "healing all manner of sickness among the people." St. Matt. iv. 23.

And again it is said, that His fame spreading abroad to distant regions, "they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases, and He healed them." St. Matt. iv. 24.

He told His Apostles that a part of the blessing to be pronounced over the faithful at the last, would be because they had visited and cared for the sick. St. Matt. iv. 25-36.

He also charged them that, into whatsoever city they came, they should be careful to heal the sick.

We find St. Paul curing the father of the generous Publius, and others likewise, while he stopped at Malta. Acts xxviii. 8, 9.

Affectionate mention is made, in his letter to the Philippians, of Epaphroditus, their Bishop, who had been "sick nigh unto death" (Phil. ii. 27), but whom God in mercy had restored to health.

These few records of the olden time may serve as a specimen of the ordinary lot of men. Multitudes are always sick, requiring the grace of patience to enable them to bear up with uncomplaining fortitude, and appealing to the sympathy and help of those who enjoy the precious boon of health.

And now, from such reflections we may learn two things—our duty toward the sick, who may need assistance; and our duty toward ourselves, in view of sickness, which will sooner or later come.

I. First, as to our duty toward the sick, who may need assistance.

In one of the Homilies against the fear of death, "sore sickness, and grievous pains," which, in many cases, mark its approach, are mentioned among other reasons why it is natural to dread the assaults of the last enemy.

Moreover, the agonies of the sick are sometimes so excruciating, that there is danger of the loss of mind, and even of their denying the faith. Hence, in that most earnest prayer in the Burial Service, we are taught to say: "O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee!"

All this might happen, with nothing but *sickness*

to be endured, and when free from the attendant circumstances of poverty, and other manifold discomforts.

Those who are well off in life, can have things arranged to suit themselves. The large and well ventilated room, the comfortable bed with its clean and wholesome linen, the varied delicacies to suit the morbid appetite, the gentle and unwearied attentions of kindred and friends—all this, and more, money may readily command.

But there are those who can expect no such alleviations to suffering.

The kind physician comes.—May God reward, at the last day, the many visits of mercy which he makes to the afflicted poor!—He examines the patient's symptoms, and carefully prescribes. A raging fever is at its height. The doctor leaves directions that the sick man should be kept quiet. Quiet, indeed! He might as well command the mill-dam to stop its ceaseless roar, or the hard hailstones not to rattle upon the roof.

What with a whole family crowded into one small room, the air stifling hot, the necessary work going on, noisy children constantly running in and out, the racket in the next house, or even in the apartment overhead, how can quiet be hoped for?

The best medical advice may be given, but half the chances of recovery are taken away by annoyances such as these.

The minister of God arrives. He asks of the welfare of the sick. He prays for his recovery. His petition in such a case is nothing more nor less than asking God to work a miracle in the sufferer's behalf because he must be left in "a condition much more likely to make a well man sick, than a sick man well."

It is very true that many of these painful circumstances, which add to the miseries of sickness, cannot be wholly done away with, but they may be greatly improved; and our own beds will be the softer, and our own consciences lighter, if those of us who are able would take a little more care about the wants of the sick.

II. But besides remembering the poor in such cases, we ought also to think seriously of the time when all will be called to lie down upon the bed of languishing.

You may be well and active now. The bloom of uninterrupted health may paint your cheeks. Strength enough, and to spare, may be afforded to attend to your daily business. Aye, buoyant youth may display the exuberance of spirits in the mazy dance, and scenes of festivity and mirth; but the time of sickness must come!

There will be some morning of your lives, when business will be going on in the shops, and on the streets, but *you* will be far otherwise engaged. There will be some night of pleasure, when the young and

the beautiful have gathered at the concert or the ball, and *you*, who have been accustomed to be conspicuous at such places before, will be tossing uneasily upon your couch.

You may perhaps be missed, and carelessly inquired after, but it will not cause one note of the songstress to tremble, it will not hinder one whirl of the dancers, because it is whispered that you are dangerously sick. The disease may not be fatal. You may recover again. But remember that the time for your *last* sickness is drawing near.

Most of you have had ailments of some sort, and have been confined for a season to the house. Some have been shaken by agues, or parched by fevers, or racked by coughs, or agcnized by breaks and bruises. Did it ever enter your mind at such a time to begin an abstruse and perplexing study? Would the lawyer think of sending for Blackstone, or the tradesman for his ledger, to spend these hours of distraction and suffering in attending to business?

And suppose you that the bed of sickness is a convenient or suitable place to arrange your long neglected account with God.

Ask those who have been really ill—I am willing to leave the decision to them.

Grace to bear up under sickness must come from God. It must be sought for in time of health. In *harvest* we lay by food for the *winter*. In *health* prep-

aration should be made for the time of *sickness*, and the hour of *death*.

The enemy who is often looked for does the least harm when he comes. Thus let us prepare ourselves for death.

O let us all be truly wise. Then shall we have our portion in that blessed land where "the inhabitant shall not say, *I am sick*."

## SERMON XXIV.

### SUDDEN DEATH.

There is but a step between me and death.—1 SAMUEL XX. 3.

"CÆSAR the Dictator," remarks De Quincey, "at his last dinner party, and the very evening before his assassination, being questioned as to the mode of death which, in his opinion, might seem the most eligible, replied: 'That which should be most sudden.' On the other hand, the Divine Litany of the Church, when breathing forth supplications, as if in some representative character for the whole human race prostrate before God, place such a death in the very van of horrors. 'From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle and murder, and from sudden death, good Lord deliver us.' Sudden death is here made to crown the climax in a grand ascent of calamities; it is the last of curses; and yet, by the noblest of Romans, it is treated as the first of blessings."\*

When we come to look carefully into the use of the word *sudden*, it will be found that there is no necessary

\* "Vision of Sudden Death."

difference on this point between the Pagan Cæsar and the Liturgy of the Christian Church. Both refer to a *violent* death.

By the term *sudden*, however, the Roman intended an *unlingering* death, while the Prayer Book means a death *without warning or preparation*.

Should the word *sudden* in the Litany be understood in a different sense from this, it would prove that many holy men had been earnestly praying to be delivered from something, which, at last, actually came upon them, and that God does not grant His people what they ask for.

In reading the biographies of devout men, I have been struck with the fact how often they have been carried away by *sudden, unlingering* deaths. A few instances occur to me at the moment. Bishop Kidder was killed by the falling of a chimney. Bishop Kemp, of Maryland, by the overturning of a stage. Bishop Heber died in a bath immediately upon his return from Church. Archbishop Whitgift was struck with paralysis on his way to the council chamber. Bishop Berkley died of disease of the heart while listening to the reading of his daughter. Bishop Griswold, of Massachusetts, sank down at the door of his assistant and successor. Bishop Fletcher expired while sitting in his chair, in apparent health.

And, not to multiply examples, the gifted and the good Dr. Arnold, the great master of history, a clergyman who has left an enduring mark upon our age,



awoke with a sharp pain in the chest, and very soon breathed his last.

Now, although they were called away without immediate warning, they did not die *sudden* deaths in the sense in which the word is employed in our prayers. They were *prepared* to go. The petition which they had offered up during their whole lives, was not denied.

Who among us has not need to join most heartily in the supplication, "*From sudden death, good Lord, deliver us*"? Every grand stride which is made in the march of improvement, is adding to the risk of our being snatched away without warning; and of course, if unprepared, it will be a *sudden* death—sudden in the most alarming sense of the expression—a death without hope.

The mighty agencies of Nature, and the tremendous forces called forth by science, have become obedient servants to man's overmastering will, and put to shame some of the ancient fables in the Arabian tales. But with every additional increase in *strength* and *speed*, comes also additional *peril*, and hence the greater need for constant preparation and unceasing prayer.

Let me illustrate this position by a few familiar scenes. Two steamboats, crowded with passengers, push off from the dock, and are soon plowing their way through the midst of the treacherous lake, or the wide and dangerous river. They start with a heavy

press of steam, and from the excitement of the passengers, it is evident that something of interest is at stake. The boats glide along smoothly side by side, each panting for the victory. The firemen may be seen, ranged on each side of the open furnaces, armed with long iron bars, with which they are constantly stirring up the blazing mass and cramming in more wood and coal. The smoke rises from the huge chimneys in volumes dark and portentous. The heat is becoming oppressive. A sickening smell of oil pervades the boat. The black paint shrivels off from the iron chimney. Suspicious puffs of smoke appear from the light wood-work. The air above the heated chimneys has assumed a lurid tinge. The combustible flooring, already scorched and charred, now blazes up, and the fiery sheet spreads instantaneously, far and wide.

I will drop the curtain at this point. The rush of the frenzied multitude, the shrieks of despair, and the agonizing groans of the dying, are too appalling to be described.

Of those who travel by water, it may, without exaggeration, be said, in the language of the text, that *there is but a step between them and death!*

The second scene. A train of cars leaves the railroad station, thronged with human beings, and is flying swiftly on its way. It passes through the valleys with lightning speed. It thunders across the rivers. It pants up the sides of some opposing hill. It passes,

unhindered, through the hearts of the mountains. The smoking engine, which leads the train, seems possessed of power, without limit or control.

But swiftness and safety are oftentimes, in a great degree, opposed. The arrangement of hours for starting and stopping, may be agreed upon with the nicest care. The most trusty agents may be employed. In machinery so complicated in itself, and spreading over so wide a space, accidents may happen in a thousand unexpected ways.

See the keeper of the drawbridge overtaken by drowsiness at his post. The moment for the passage of the thundering train is alarmingly near at hand. The shrill whistle proclaims the swift approach of the flying wheels. The unfaithful agent is roused from sleep, and hastens, with unwonted speed, to make amends for his unpardonable neglect. He comes a few seconds too late. A multitude, wholly unprepared for death, sink down in the angry flood!

Let us shift the scene to another place. The engine, with its long train of freight and living souls, is circling along some high embankment, overhanging a deep and threatening chasm. The broad and blazing eye of light which warns those before to beware of the rapid approach of the crushing wheels, affords little safety to such as are borne along, with lightning speed, without power to help themselves.

There is a slight obstruction in the way. A fragment of rock, from the cliffs above, has fallen upon the

track; or some fiend, in human shape, has placed a log across the rails. The engineer gazes through the thick darkness to guard against all dangers of the sort, but he sees it not.

A sudden jar! A rough and alarming bound! A strange heaving to one side! The train has gone over amongst the craggy rocks with a dreadful crash, which tells its own tale of horror!

And thus I might go on and paint other and still more alarming ways in which death, from this one system of improvements, should be looked for almost as a thing of course.

Of those who travel by land, it may, with all truthfulness, be said: "There is but a step between them and death."

And what constant occasion have we to offer in behalf of friends, the often-said, earnest prayer: "That it may please Thee, good Lord, to preserve all who travel by land or by water!"

But "sudden death" may be the lot of those who remain quietly, (and, as they hope, safely) at their homes.

"Each season has its own disease,  
Its peril every hour."

In the very midst of life we are in death. Some have the seeds of disease sown in the system, which only require a trifling cause to develop, and to hasten the arrival of the destroyer. Others are exposed to the same result from a different source. The very super-

abundance of health renders their hold upon life most precarious. The palsy and apoplexy are waiting impatiently for their victims. There is danger of death by murder, by the accidental swallowing of poison, by lightning, by pestilence, by sudden exposure to heat and cold; by casualties innumerable, such as the falling of a brick or a decayed limb, by the use of fire-arms, by machinery, by the explosion of gun-powder, by the pressure of a crowd, or even, as in the case of Anacreon, of ancient poetic memory, by being choked with a grape-stone.

Instead of being astonished that we should be exposed to sudden death from such a variety of causes, the real ground for wonder is that an instrument made up of so many strings, should remain in tune so long.

I have not enlarged upon this doleful theme to render you low-spirited, but to impress upon you this important truth, that *our hold on life is extremely uncertain, and that if we have any preparation to make, we had better set about it without delay.*

A languid state of body, or a bewildered mind, may take our last hours entirely out of our control, even if death does not come upon us in the form of sudden accident.

It is well for us, while in life and health, to be making ourselves familiar with the image of the pale messenger. Joseph prepared his sepulchre in his

garden, and he reaped the reward of this wise forethought.

If you are living in the neglect of prayer, in the neglect of your Bible, in the neglect of any known duty, oh, I beseech you, attend to these things *now*. Yours may be a call without previous warning, and which brooks no delay. God will mercifully accept of such preparation as if made in your last hours. Then though death may come, all unlooked for and unannounced, to you it will not be *sudden death*.

## SERMON XXV.

### GOING UP TO JERUSALEM.

Behold, we go up to Jerusalem.—ST. MATTHEW xx. 18.

PALESTINE is a land of hills and valleys. Mountains of greater or less elevation and extent "shoot up in all directions, and greet the approaching traveler from every quarter. During the sacred pilgrimage, he never loses sight of them; and when he leaves the consecrated soil, they are the last objects to which he turns and bids a lingering farewell."\*

These physical characteristics of the Land of Promise explain those expressions so often met with in the Scriptures, one of which has been announced as the text: "*Behold, we go up to Jerusalem.*"

The holy city stood upon its own sacred hill, with "mountains round about." Approach it from what direction you might, it would be, of necessity, "*going up to Jerusalem.*"

Heaven, as you know, is spoken of in the Bible as "the great city," "the holy Jerusalem" (Rev. xxi. 10), "the New Jerusalem." Hebrews xii. 22, and Rev. iii. 12.)

\* Wainwright's "Pathways of our Blessed Lord," p. 44.

It was this heavenly Jerusalem to which the patriarchs looked forward, a city "whose Builder and Maker is God." Heb xi. 10.

It was this glorious city to which St. Paul refers when he says, "Jerusalem which is above, the mother of us all." Gal. iv. 26.

It was this heavenly Jerusalem which St. John beheld in vision, and which his fervid pen has so graphically described. Rev. xxi., etc.

If the position of the *earthly* Jerusalem, in Palestine, was such, that every one, before entering her gates, must "*go up*" to get there, so, with the strictest propriety and truth, when speaking of the *heavenly* city, of which the other Jerusalem was a type, may we adopt the language of the text, and, in answer to those who ask in amazement, whither our steps are turned, and why we refuse to be hindered by the trifling vanities of the world, say, in the words of that Divine Saviour whose followers we claim to be, "*Behold, we go up to Jerusalem.*"

The brilliant picture which the imagination so readily forms of the paradise of the redeemed, drawn from various intimations given us in the Word of God, must inspire every one with a desire of sharing in the future blessedness of God's children. What questions, then, can possibly be more interesting and important than these: "*Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall rise up in His holy place?*" *Who shall hereafter "have right to the tree of life,*



and enter in through the gates into the city?" Psalm xxiv. 3, and Rev. xxii. 14.

I might answer, in a single sentence, *those whose conduct shows that they are "going up to Jerusalem."*

This expression of the text may be fairly said to imply,

I. *A growth and an advancement in those things which are good.*

No one is born holy. It is impossible to become so by a sudden change, such as is sometimes confidently talked of. It requires time, and patience, and prayer. And yet it is all-important that this radical change in our characters and habits should take place; for the Bible emphatically declares, that "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews xii. 14.

It is right that this should be so, over and above the reason that the happiness of Heaven is designed as a *reward* for God's obedient children. "There are bodily indispositions which affect the taste, so that the sweetest flavors become ungrateful to the palate; and indispositions which impair the sight, tinging the fair face of Nature with some sickly hue. In like manner, there is a moral malady, which disorders the inward sight and taste; and no man laboring under it is in a condition to enjoy what the Scriptures call "the fullness of joy in God's presence, and pleasures at His right hand for evermore."

Those who "go up" to the heavenly Jerusalem

gradually increase in holiness by a diligent use of the appointed means; such as daily prayer, the careful study of the Bible, regularity in attending public worship, and a devout participation of the holy Supper of our Lord.

II. Another evidence that we are "going up to Jerusalem," and that we shall finally be allowed to enter the golden gates, is *love to God*.

This, in its proper order, would come before the observance of the several duties already named. I can easily conceive of a person who said his prayers and read a chapter in the Bible, because he was alarmed by some unusual aches and pains, or because he was troubled with a hacking cough, or had raised blood from the lungs, or because he felt a strange numbness in his limbs. He would begin, in a desperate hurry, to try and make up for lost time, lest death should overtake him, and God should cast him down to hell. But there would be no true religion in such a course. This would not be "going up to Jerusalem." Our heavenly Father would have us obey Him from a higher principle than slavish fear. He has done every thing to deserve our affection, and He expects to be loved.

This is the only motive which will influence us to do right, or, at least, to *try* to do it, always and habitually.

III. Again. If our faces are indeed turned toward Jerusalem, like travelers who have a long journey to

accomplish, *we shall be most anxious to lay aside every unnecessary weight, and to overcome the corrupting influences of our besetting sins.*

Worldly business, it is true, should not be given up, nor worldly interests neglected; but these must be regarded as only of secondary importance. We cannot be "*going up to Jerusalem,*" if our hearts and affections are rooted in the earth. There will be aspirations after something higher, something better, if our steps are turned toward the Delectable Mountains. A person who has any thing beyond an indefinite, shadowy notion that there is such a place as Heaven, will be laying up treasure above, by gladly doing acts of kindness and mercy upon earth.

Let no one be discouraged by reason of past transgressions. Hear the blessed promise of God to those who repent and turn to Him. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah i. 18. After all that we may say about the use of *means*, in order to help us onward toward Heaven, it is not in these things themselves, but to the grace of God, through Christ, conveyed to us by these channels, that we must look for pardon and sanctification.

It is only because we have a Mediator and Advocate with God, even Jesus Christ the Righteous, that any of us can hope for the enjoyment of eternal blessedness in Heaven.

Every one here to-day knows whether or not he is traveling toward that better world. If there has been any doubt before, the evidences to which I have just referred will settle the question beyond dispute.

We cannot be "going up to Jerusalem," without being sensible that our course is turned thitherward. If interest or pleasure lead us to any particular spot upon earth, we are willing to put ourselves to some inconvenience to get there, even though we are obliged to plod along on foot. We think of such a place often when, very likely, we are occupied by business elsewhere.

So with those who are seeking "a better country" in heaven, and who make the pearl of great price the chief object of pursuit.

Jerusalem! thou blessed place!  
How full of glory, full of grace!  
Far, far above the starry skies  
Thy golden battlements arise.

Jerusalem! where parents stand,  
And blessed children, hand in hand,  
And see their mighty Saviour's face,  
And laud and magnify His grace.

Jerusalem! thou seat of love!  
Thou city of our God above!  
May I behold Thy glory rise,  
Thy golden lustre fill the skies.

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem!" But why this

loitering by the way? Why have we stopped our march, and assembled in God's house? Why do we kneel around His altar here to-day?

To refresh and strengthen our fainting souls with the spiritual food which a Saviour's love has so bountifully prepared; to fit ourselves for a new and more vigorous start in the way which leadeth unto everlasting life.

Before us lie dreariness, and difficulties, and dangers, and death; but afar off, in the distance, rise the glittering walls and lofty battlements of the celestial city—the glorious manifestation of God's goodness, for which the earnest expectation of the whole creation longs and waits.

Let the world and the devil offer what attractions they please, *our* purpose is firmly fixed. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem." My friends, will not you go with us?

## SERMON XXV.

### DEGREES OF BLISS IN HEAVEN.

Ye which have followed Me; in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.—**ST. MATT. xix. 28, 29.**

It is natural for us to be anxious to learn all we can about heaven. The light which the Bible throws upon the subject often seems dim and unsatisfactory. This, in a great measure, is owing to ourselves. We determine in our own minds that a matter so full of interest, must certainly be found in the most prominent places. Hence, we hurry over the less striking passages, in which, as it often happens, the clearest intimations are given. The text is a case in point.

A rich young man, whose life from childhood had been marked by great propriety and self-control, felt half persuaded to become a follower of Jesus. But when the terms of enlistment were made known, he instantly drew back. The sacrifices required were more than he was willing to undergo.

The Apostles, who were listening to the conversation, and who had given up their all for Christ, very naturally asked what return they might expect for so strong a proof of their faith. The answer was the encouraging promise announced as the text: "Ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

Our Lord holds out to the disciples an ample *compensation* for all their sacrifices and sufferings in the cause of the Gospel. Their reward was to be both present and future. In St. Mark's gospel the expression is: "Ye shall receive a hundred fold, *now, in this time*," chap. x. 30. Or as St. Luke has it, he "shall receive *manifold more in this present time*, and in the world to come, life everlasting." Chap. xviii. 30.

It is somewhat remarkable that the sense of the text is lost to a very large proportion of the readers of the Bible; not from any fault in the translation, but from the mere misplacing of a comma. The point should be after "Me," instead of being after regeneration. By the term *regeneration* here, baptism is not meant. It refers to the *resurrection at the last day*, which will be the second generation of men to life.

The righteous are said at the resurrection to become the children of God, because they are raised by Him to a life of immortality; or as our Lord Himself expresses it, "They are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." St. Matt. xx. 36.

The text, then, is perfectly plain. "Ye which have followed Me, shall, as a reward in the great day of the resurrection of the dead and of forming the new and eternal order of things, the day of judgment, the regeneration, be signally honored and blessed."

A most absurd notion commonly prevails that all who shall be received into heaven will share alike in its rewards. It is not too much to say that such an idea makes the Almighty unjust. If one person spends his whole life in steady, uniform, conscientious effort to serve and please God, and another gives up the freshness of youth and the vigor of manhood to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, and only repents in time to save his soul, would it be right that both should enter upon the same measure of enjoyment?

The bare statement of the proposition shows its absurdity. As well might the raw recruits expect the ample pay and the bounty lands of the old and victorious veterans.

Besides, the whole tenor of Scripture is opposed to it. Not a single passage can be fairly quoted in its support. "He that soweth little" in this world, "shall reap little" in the world to come. 2 Cor. ix. 6 compare with Gal. vi. 8. Our Saviour speaks of a "righteous



man's reward," and a "prophet's reward," of sitting on His right and left hand, St. Matt. x. 41, as distinct degrees of blessedness. St. Paul tells us that as "one star differeth from another star in glory," so also will it be in "the resurrection of the dead," and in the rewards of the new creation. 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.

Our Lord teaches His followers to secure to themselves a pre-eminence and glory in heaven, by condescending to perform lowly offices upon earth. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." St. Matt. xx. 26, 27. St. Jerome justly remarks upon this: "If we be equal in heaven, we in vain humble ourselves here that we may be greater there."

"In my Father's house there are many mansions," St. John xiv. 2; *i. e.*, some higher, some lower, according to our growth in grace and our meetness for heaven. "How are there many mansions with the Father," Tertullian significantly asks, "but according to the variety of merits or the good works of men?"

But I need not tax your patience by looking after other passages, while the text itself settles the whole question. By the promise made to the Apostles that they should "sit upon twelves thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," we are to understand that some singular and surpassing blessedness was in store for them. They became princes and rulers in "the

Kingdom of God." Though they had broken away from every earthly tie, they had still a reward below. "The whole Church was their ghostly family; they had sons, and brethren, and sisters in all lands. All the whole earth was their home. . . . When most likened in suffering to the Passion of their Lord, there was, ever deep and full, a river of holy calm making glad the city of God. . . . Never any man forsook any thing for his Master's sake, but even in this life he hath a fulfillment of the promise in some unlooked-for compensation; not it may be, alike in kind, but full of as deep a joy."

The highest rewards of heaven can only be gained by a life of sacrifice and self-denial. Very many Christian people know nothing of such a life. It costs them no time, nor money, nor pleasure, to be followers of Jesus. They should feel the weight of the Cross. They should be sensible from something which they have given up, something which they suffer, that it is no easy thing to follow in His steps. We cannot sit with folded hands, and be saved without effort. It is "*by patient continuance in well doing*" that we must "seek for glory, and honor, and immortality." Romans ii. 7.

There will be no glittering crowns in heaven for any who have not thus toiled and endured on earth.

It is something to make us reflect very seriously when we find that religion and our worldly interests always harmonize together when the doing of good

actions and the leaving undone of bad ones, is sure to lead to our present advantage.

If the fear of reproach, the hope of patronage, the love of applause, the desire to conform to general notions of propriety, did not influence you to be Christians, would you have ever made the effort? Leave out of view the dread of coming wrath, would it have entered your minds even to put on the *semblance* of godliness? Has a real, honest, zealous wish for the glory of God and the spread of His kingdom, any thing to do with your conformity to His will?

Where are the persons in these days of self-indulgence and apathy, who, in any sense, can be said to have "forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands," for Christ's sake, and thus become entitled to the "hundred-fold" blessings which He has promised in His kingdom?

Now and then we read of a devoted missionary or a pious layman, who has given up worldly comforts, and devoted his whole time and energies to the Church. But oh, how seldom! We occasionally hear of pious females who wait and watch about the bed of sickness, and look after the poor, and instruct the young, all for the glory of God, seeking no present advantage, and having "respect unto the recompense of the reward."

But such examples are so rare, that the newspapers

speak of them as something strange, and even Christians hold up their hands in amazement.

I do not doubt that people may be very good who make no sacrifices so great as these. They will all be "rewarded according to their works." But you must deny the truth of our blessed Saviour's words, if you hesitate to allow that the classes of persons just described will enjoy more present satisfaction, more peace of mind, more support under trials, more confidence in death, more blessedness in heaven, than those who have shown less faith in God, by denying themselves less.

If people will make religion an easy thing, they must not expect rewards. If it saves them from hell, if it brings them within the outer courts of paradise, if it enables them to catch faint and far-off echoes of the angel's song, and imperfect glimpses of heavenly glory, they will have the greater reason to bless and magnify the goodness of Him who has redeemed them by His blood.

I know that some persuade themselves that if they had lived when the Saviour and the Apostles tarried upon earth, they could have left home and kindred without a sigh, and become devoted children of the kingdom. But their daily conduct shows how mistaken they are in regard to themselves. There are quite as many opportunities for making sacrifices now. Jesus is no further off. He is present in His Church. It is His voice which speaks in all her ordinances.

When the call upon persons to be confirmed is heard, bidding them, in the name of God, to "come out and be separate" from the world, and be received as the "sons and daughters" of the Lord Almighty, (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18,) it is an occasion when great self-denial may be shown. Courage must be summoned, ridicule must be braved, bad habits must be given up, vows of obedience must be taken, and oftentimes, literally and truly, "brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children," must be left, in order that we may follow Christ.

But suppose that your friends all go with you in uniting with the Church, that your standing in society places you above the fear of ridicule or reproach, can you make no extraordinary sacrifice for Christ? You can. The "houses" and "lands," the stock and the bonds, the rents and interest, the salaries and wages, which you count as your worldly wealth, may be so spent as to be laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come.

The more we give the more we gain; the more we suffer the more we shall afterward rejoice.

Even in "this present time" shall we learn the blessedness of thus laboring for our God. When worldly cares and disappointments teach us how uncertain are its boasted joys, when ingratitude and perverseness show the little dependence to be placed upon its friendships and professions, we may rise superior to every annoyance and every grief, if a life of

self-denial has secured for us the good-will of that Father in heaven who will love us unto the end.

Feverish dreams and frightful delirium may prey upon us in the agonies of death; a dull stupor may palsy every faculty and extinguish every hope; but some moment of consciousness will return, and then the eye of faith will look onward to that glorious rest which remaineth for the people of God. The voice of Him in whose service we have toiled, and who holds the keys of death and hell, will repeat the promise, so broad, so blessed, so full of comfort:—  
“Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”

## SERMON XXVII.

### RECOGNITION OF FRIENDS IN ANOTHER WORLD.

I shall go to him.—2 SAMUEL xii., *part of 23d verse.*

SHALL we be united again in heaven to the friends whom we have loved on earth?

This is a question of great interest to us all. It is true, our salvation does not depend upon our being able to answer it; but still we would like to be satisfied upon the point.

We might bring the subject to the bar of reason, and examine the probabilities on both sides of the question. And what would *reason* say? Why, you may appeal to the common sense of people of every name and nation, and almost with one voice they would answer, that they *do* confidently expect to know and love those hereafter whom they have known and loved here. It is in strictest harmony with the “dictates of reason to believe,” says Dr. Paley, “that the same great God who brings men to life again, will bring those together whom death has separated. When His power is at work in this great dispensation, it is very probable that this should be a part of His gracious design.”

This fond hope—nay, I may better call it, this *assured anticipation*, has again and again dried the mourner's tears, and kindled a cheering light amidst the gloominess of the grave.

“Not lost, but gone before,” is the comfort which reason whispers to the sad and sorrowing heart.

We may very naturally suppose that one part of our enjoyment in heaven, will consist in conversing with our friends upon the various temptations and trials through which we passed, in journeying toward the land of everlasting life; of the fierce conflicts with the enemy in the “good fight of faith”; and of marvelous deliverances and triumphs through the might of the “great Captain of our salvation.”

No one who thinks of heaven with any degree of interest, but regards it as a place where he shall see God and our Saviour—a place where he shall recognize Abraham, and Moses, and the Apostles Peter, and Paul, and John, and the martyrs Stephen, and Polycarp, and Ignatius—a place where he shall meet again with his father, and mother, and sisters, and brothers, and friends.

Now, would such an expectation have been so universally implanted in the human mind, if those who cherish it were all doomed to disappointment at the last?

Reason answers No; and she does it loudly, and with strong confidence that she is right.

Let us turn now to the Scriptures, and see whether



there be any warrant in them for the views just presented.

Allow me to say, however, that, since the Bible, as a general rule, affords but little light upon matters of mere curiosity, we should not be too sanguine as to the amount of evidence which will be afforded upon this subject.

I do not pretend that the doctrine of the recognition of friends in heaven is plainly and positively revealed, as great and fundamental doctrines are.

In a question of this kind, upon which the hopes and expectations of nearly all people are in most perfect agreement, the very silence of the Scriptures might be regarded as an admission that such hopes and expectations are well founded.

But if I cannot point you to any special revelation on the subject, I can at least produce clear and undoubted intimations, which amount to the same thing in the end.

Have you ever thought why it was that the worthies of old time were so particular about the place of their burial, always insisting, with a pertinacity for which there must have been some good reason, that their bones might be laid near the graves of their kindred?

Was it not that they not only expected to rise again from the dead, but that they anticipated a happy reunion with departed friends?

What mattered it to Jacob, whether his body should

be buried in the desert, or sunk in the deep, if he had not believed that, upon the resurrection morn, he should recognize his parents, and the wife of his bosom, as they came forth from the cave which Abraham had bought for "a burying place," in the "land of Canaan"? Gen. xlix. 29, 30.

Why did Joseph, on his dying bed, oblige his brethren to promise that, when God should visit His people, and lead them forth from Egypt, his bones should be carried away, and laid near the home of his fathers? Gen. l. 25.

Does this afford no ground of probability for the opinion that he desired to rest with those in the grave whom he expected to know again in heaven?

But I can produce yet stronger intimations than these.

The language of King David, in my text, is a case in point. He had lost a favorite child. While life lasted, he fasted and prayed that his darling might be spared to him. But when hope was buried in the tomb, the doating father dried his tears, and soothed the sadness of his heart, by the assured anticipation of reunion with his son: "Wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

But you may say, that I have given nothing more than the crude notions of the early Jews, and that you would choose rather to seek for light from the Gospel.

To the New Testament, therefore, let us go. In the intermediate state between death and the resurrection, to which our Saviour refers in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the soul of Dives is represented as recognizing the soul of the beggar, and as remembering the things which had happened upon earth. St. Luke xix.

It is plain, also, from the words of Jesus to the penitent thief, that the soul of the poor pardoned one would *know* the Saviour when they entered upon the rest of Paradise. St. Luke xxiii. 43.

When Moses and Elias conversed with our Saviour upon the Mount of Transfiguration, the three favored disciples knew these ancient worthies, and St. Peter called them by name. St. Matthew xvii. 2, &c.; St. Mark ix.

Is it not fair to suppose that, if Moses and Elias were thus readily known in their short and unlooked-for visit to earth, we shall be able, without difficulty, to recognize the faithful when exalted to Heaven?

Nay, further. Our Lord says expressly that there are those who shall one day "*see* Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God" (St. Luke xiii. 28); and others who shall "*come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob*" (St. Matt. viii. 11), enjoying the rest, and sharing in the rewards of the redeemed.

If there be no such thing as a recognition of friends

hereafter, what does St. Paul mean when, contrasting the limited knowledge of our present state with the unclouded vision to be enjoyed hereafter, he declares, "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known"? 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

And again. There can be no question that he fully expected a personal knowledge hereafter of those over whom he had exercised the high and holy office of a Bishop in the Church. When writing to the Colossians, he declares how anxious he is to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." 1 Col. xxvii. 9. And to the Thessalonians he says: "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.

The undoubted meaning of these passages is—and they can have no other—that St. Paul hoped, at the general judgment, to present unto the Saviour, as the seals of his ministry, the persons whom his warnings and instructions had led into the way of truth. To be able to do this, he must of necessity know his converts in their new and glorified state. If this be true—and I see no reason to doubt it—why may not *we*, and all Christians, know our friends at the last day, and spend a happy eternity with them?

I believe that in Heaven each pastor will know the people of his charge, and that then and there they will

thank him, with unfeigned hearts, for his work of faith and labor of love.

I believe that children will be restored to their parents, and parents to their children, and that the various friendly relations of life will be renewed.

“The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.”

True friendship sweetens the bitterest cup which we are called upon here to drink. Its fragrant memory lives and lingers after death. Surely such friendship, though thus interrupted for a time, will revive again in the fairer regions beyond the grave.

“It is yet but a little while, and we shall be delivered from the burden and the conflict; and, with all those who have gone before us in the righteous struggle, enjoy the deep raptures of a Mediator’s presence. Then, reunited to the friends with whom we took sweet counsel upon earth, we shall call to mind the tug and din of the war, only that, with a more bounding throb, and a richer song, we may feel and celebrate the wonders of redemption.”

Upon reviewing the whole subject, must we settle down into the opinion that—although it is certainly a curious and an interesting one—after all, it is of no great practical importance? I think this would be a very wrong conclusion.

Does it not rather have a tendency to strengthen the tender ties which bind us together upon earth, to

believe that this is only the beginning of affection and love which will outlast the shining stars?

Has no one been irresistibly drawn back from sin, and encouraged to do right, because he longs to meet a father, or mother, or wife, or sister, or child, in heaven? The experience of many would prove this to be true.

Often and again has the fond parent struggled onward in the way of duty, animated by the hope of meeting again the smiling infant, or the engaging child, which the Saviour has carried home to His bosom.

But remember, also, that there are those in Paradise who will be expecting *you*! When the last day dawns, and the angelic messengers bear you away on wings of love from the burning world, a countless throng will stand about the throne; and among them glistening eyes of the loved and the lost will be looking out, to recognize a parent, or husband, or friend among those who come.

Oh! may no disappointed child, no afflicted wife, no devoted friend, say, in bitterness of soul, "*My father—my husband, the companion of my youth—is not here!*"

## SERMON XXVIII.

### BLESSEDNESS OF BEING EARLY IN CHRIST.

“Who also were in Christ before me.”—ROMANS xvi. 7.

ST. PAUL, in closing his letter to the Christians at Rome, sends a touching message to his two companions in tribulation, whose names he is careful to mention with especial regard. Once, he had been a proud, haughty, vain-boasting man. Once, he had headed a band of ruffians, to persecute and destroy the followers of Christ.

Now, he is all meekness, gentleness, and love. Now, in seeking for the most honorable mention which can be made of those brethren in the Church, he acknowledges his inferiority to them, because they “were in Christ” before him. While *he* was a stranger to God, and a resolute opposer of the Gospel of His Son, *they* were living as obedient children, and adorning the doctrine they professed, by purity of heart and abundant labors.

The truth taught in the text is simply this: *the blessedness of being early in Christ.*

What is the meaning of the expression, “*being in Christ?*” It implies, of course, that we have been engrafted into His Body the Church, by Baptism. Not

only so, but it supposes that parents and sponsors have taken pains to show us our duty afterwards.

As one really interested in a child's worldly prosperity will look after those things which have a tendency to promote it, so the well-being of his spiritual nature will be diligently cared for. The lisping tongue will be taught the fitting words of prayer. Not that a mind so tender can understand the nature, or the need of prayer. The object is, to form while young, a *habit* of devotion. As reason dawns, and the faculties increase in strength, the parent, or teacher, will tell the child more and more of God and Heaven, and the way to that happy home. Then, too, begins a course of gentle discipline, which, while leading him to submit without hesitation or reserve, to parental rule, will gradually prepare him to reverence and obey the higher authority of God.

The child is also brought to church—not, indeed, as one who can appreciate the beauties of the service, or unite with understanding in every part, but to accustom him to regard it as a holy place—where God is worshipped, and where His people meet to learn His blessed will.

At the age of fifteen or sixteen years, this child “in Christ,” with heart touched by the Holy Spirit, and with habits of obedience thus carefully learned, will be ready to be confirmed. He is far from being good, when measured by a perfect standard. He is only using the various *helps*, which God has provided, to enable him to become better.



“ Youth, when devoted to the Lord,  
 Is pleasing in His eyes ;  
 A flower, though offered in the bud,  
 Is no vain sacrifice.”\*

After the blessing bestowed in Confirmation, the young Christian tries to be still more regular and earnest in his prayers. No excitement, nor parade, nor noise, mark the development of his inner life. But gradually, the germ unfolds itself, and then the bud is seen. The bud gives place to the flower, and the flower is followed by fruit—the fruit of righteousness. What are the advantages of such a course? Why not delay—as so many do—until the close of life, before engaging in God’s service? I have several reasons to present.

1. This consecration to God in infancy and youth *makes our work easier.*

\* Jewish lads at thirteen years of age were called “ Sons of the congregation of Israel,” and after due preparation, they were allowed to partake of the Passover. When twelve years old, our blessed Saviour went up to Jerusalem, with his parents, and united in the celebration of the Feast. The Church has always encouraged the young to come to Confirmation and the Lord’s Supper. Even religious bodies which are sometimes considered more strict and rigid in their requirements for membership, entertain the same opinions in regard to this subject. Thus we find in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, this emphatic language: “ When baptized children come to years of discretion, if they be free from scandal, appear sober and steady, and to have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord’s body, they ought to be informed it is their duty and their privilege to come to the Lord’s Supper.”—[Form of Government, b. 2, c. 9, § 1.]

The one great business of our lives should be to save our souls. If we are taught this truth from the beginning, we shall be very unlikely to forget it. How easy to bend the pliant twig! How hard to move the sturdy tree! Such is the difference between renewing the heart unto holiness in childhood and in age. It is often far less trouble to dig down a mountain, or to change the course of a river, than to bring one of adult years to receive, in humility and faith, the ordinances of Christ, and to put himself in the way of salvation. The young know nothing of the struggle which such persons must go through with. They take one step at a time. The road is easy, and the direction plain. The lamented Dr. Bedell once remarked, in a sermon to young men, "I have now been nearly twenty years in the ministry, and I here publicly state to you, that I do not believe I could enumerate three persons, over fifty years of age, whom I have ever heard ask the solemn and momentous question, 'What shall I do to be saved?'"

An old man, one day taking a child on his knee, entreated him to seek God *now*—to pray to Him, and to love Him. With artless simplicity the little one looked up and asked, "Why do not *you* seek God?" The old man answered, his utterance half choked with tears, "I would, child, but my heart is *hard*—my heart is *hard*!"

2. Again, by beginning to serve God early, *our work is better done*

He Who invites us to remember Him "in the days of our youth," will show His love by affording abun-

dant help. How much more enviable the lot of those, who from early infancy have been preserved from grievous falls, and have gradually gone on, from strength to strength, than of the most zealous Christian, who, late in life, has turned from sin to God! "From what has the grace of regeneration protected them; from what familiarity with evil; from what excitements of the carnal mind; from what defilements of the imagination; from what obliquity of the will; from what unfeelingness of heart! From what hours of bitter remorse; from what years of toil, weakness, and infirmity, are they preserved! Why should they exhibit the noise and excitement of effort, whose very nature is moulded into unconscious obedience? The movements of nature are easy and spontaneous, and though done without reflection, are more truly the acts of the whole being than those things which we do by rule, and thought, and conscious preparation. In the one case, it has become our own—in the other, it is a borrowed nature. This is the ripe fruit of holy childhood; and to this, every one that is born again, may, in his measure, attain."

3. By being early received into the family and fold of Christ, *life is also made more happy.*

Conscience testifies, by whisperings which cannot be mistaken, that we have chosen the "good part," and that God is our Friend. The power of temptation is weakened. The growth of virtues and graces is promoted. Unreasonable doubts and fears are removed. The sting of death is effectually plucked away.

Religious ways are ways of pleasantness and peace. Who has so much cause to be happy as the true child of God? Who has a better right to enjoy the innocent pleasures of life? The sunshine, and the flowers, and the song of birds, are the gifts of Him Who would make us cheerful and contented, and Who knows that happiness can only be real and lasting, when it springs from purity of heart. Away with the absurd and unreasonable strictness which has so often brought odium upon the Gospel of that Saviour Whose "yoke is easy, and His burden light."

The pictures sketched in the "Spectator," long years ago, of one of these gloomy religionists, has many counterparts: "He thinks himself obliged in duty to be sad and disconsolate. He looks on a sudden fit of laughter as a breach of his baptismal vows. An innocent jest startles him like blasphemy. Tell him of one who is advanced to a title of honor, he lifts up his hands and eyes; describe a public ceremony, he shakes his head. All the little ornaments of life are pomps and vanities. Mirth is wanton, and wit profane. He is scandalized at youth for being lively, and at childhood for being playful. It is not the business of virtue to extirpate the affections of the mind, but to regulate them. The true spirit of religion cheers, as well as composes the soul."—[No. 494].

Great peace have they who love, and strive to obey God's law. The exhortation of the Psalmist overrides all the far-fetched rules of the narrowminded and the morose "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King."

4. I remark, in the fourth place, that the cultivation of religious principles from childhood *saves us from being destructive examples to others.*

Everybody has *some* influence. It may be small, perhaps, but it is, nevertheless, a *positive* influence for good or evil. Moreover, we shall all be held accountable for the way in which it is used.

When Lord Peterborough was the guest, for some time, of good Archbishop Fenelon of Cambray, he was so charmed with his unaffected piety, that he exclaimed at parting, "If I stay here any longer, I shall become a Christian in spite of myself."

A young man, who was about to be ordained to the holy ministry, stated that at one period of his life he had been nearly betrayed into the adoption of infidel principles. "But," he added, "there was one argument in favor of Christianity which I could never refute—the consistent conduct of my own father!"

In contrast with such examples for *good*, imagine for a moment the terrible, soul-destroying influence of evil men. Think how many profane swearers have been made and encouraged in this most hateful of all sins, by the conduct of a single individual!

What will not the proud, and the passionate, and the gambler, and the neglecter of public worship, and the glutton, and the drunkard, and the debauchee, have to condemn themselves for, when they witness the abundant crop of wickedness which has sprung from the seed which they have so thoughtlessly scattered, and which will continue to multiply itself through successive generations!

All this anguish of heart, the young Christian, if faithful to his vows, is able to escape.

5. Moreover, a timely attention to the soul's salvation *fits one for an exalted position of usefulness in God's kingdom.*

"Early piety," says Henry, "it is to be hoped, will be *eminent* piety. Those that are good betimes, are likely to be very good."

Take an old, time-wrinkled man, and endeavor to inspire him with the courage, or to teach him the arts of a soldier! Endeavor to make a scholar of him. Put him, if you choose, to a trade. What painful plodding, and, oftentimes, what unavailing effort!

But the young can master any thing. And when "the babe in Christ," signed with the cross in Baptism, is trained up, afterwards, according to that beginning, how well is he prepared to contend against his spiritual enemies, and to fight the good fight of faith! How is he enabled, by the help of God's Spirit, to cleanse the thoughts of his heart, and to govern the words of his mouth! What a vast amount of good is accomplished, in the course of a few years, by his single-handed, persevering efforts. What a blessed privilege to have one's daily life held up as a pattern, which others may safely follow!

6. Once more. By being early in Christ, and by continuing faithful unto the end, *we are certain of being rewarded at the last with "a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory."* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

As in a well-appointed army, the soldier's pay is regulated by the time of service, so is it with the fol-

lowers of the Lord Jesus, the great Captain of our Salvation. Long years of "patient continuance in well-doing" will be recompensed with the highest seats, the brightest crowns, and the most ecstatic enjoyment in the world of bliss. The veteran sinner, who serves the devil as long as inclination, or interest, or false shame, or stubbornness prompt him, may, by sincere repentance (if not delayed until God's Spirit shall cease to strive), save his soul from hell; but the mention of *reward*, in connection with such a case, is utterly absurd. The idea of reward supposes something done, which may give us a *claim* upon him who offers it. Hence the force of St. John's emphatic words, "Blessed are they that do God's commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. xxii. 14.

My young friends, I have certainly presented you with reasons enough for wishing to be united to Christ, by being incorporated into His Body, the Church. God offers you privileges which your elders can never enjoy. The season of youth, with them, has forever passed away. Will you also wait to grow old—trying the patience, and resisting the gracious invitations of the Saviour—and thus lose these precious privileges?

None of you are too young to die; none so good as not to need the timely help which your Heavenly Father is now ready to supply. "I love them that love Me, and those that seek Me early, shall find Me." Prov. viii. 17. "Rejoice, O young person, in thy

youth," He says to such as prefer to flutter away the spring-time of life in vanity and sin, "and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes." Find all the happiness you can, in pursuits so trifling, and so unworthy of immortal beings; grieve the hearts of parents; neglect the warnings of pastors; slight the offers of God; but remember what follows. The last clause of this solemn passage gives to human life its just equipoise: "But know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment." Eccles. xi. 9. This is no vain dream. The searching scrutiny of the great day will be a *personal* matter. God will bring *thee* into judgment. It will be most strict and universal. "*For all these things,*" thy wasted time, thy gifts of intellect and fortune, thy opportunities for good; "all these things" will rise up against thee at the last. Who will be foolish enough to refuse any longer to seek safety and happiness in Christ? Who will venture, after a warning so faithful, to waste his days, and harden his heart; and even if allowed a season for repentance at a later period, to be forced to look with feelings of envy upon those who proved themselves wiser and better, *by being found in Christ before him?*



## SERMON XXIX.

### CHRIST'S LOVE FOR THE CHURCH, AND OUR DUTIES AS MEMBERS OF IT.

“ Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it ; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”—EPHESIANS v. 25-27.

WHAT a broad scope of thought is embraced in these few words ! The Church militant, laboring, suffering, upon earth ! the Church cleansed, purified, glorified, in Heaven ! The Apostle, at a single glance, seemed to see it all. The Saviour establishing His kingdom in the world, appointing its laws, ordaining its officers, opening the door of Baptism, by which all nations are to be admitted to its inestimable privileges, making the faithful preaching of the Word one most important means of bringing sinners into the true fold ; all this machinery being put in operation by the Hand of Him Who is the Divine Head of the Church, and Who has given His solemn assurance that He will be with it to guide, to govern, and to bless, even unto the end of the world. And then, at the winding up of this season of probation and trial, when the work which God's holy Church was designed to accomplish shall be done—when the fleeting

shadows of time shall be followed by the unchanging realities of eternity—then a throne shall be set in the Heavens, and the great Head of the Church shall take His place upon it, as the Judge of quick and dead. All who have ever lived shall stand before Him, and while the wicked are driven away in their wickedness, He shall stretch forth His blessed Hands, once pierced with nails upon the Cross, and shall say to all who have loved and served Him, “Come, ye blessed children of My Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.”

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings (writes St. John, in the glorious visions of the Apocalypse), saying Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the linen is the righteousness of saints.” Rev. xix. 6-8. And thus the prediction of St. Paul, in our text, will be accomplished, when Christ Jesus shall receive the Bride, His Church, unto Himself, “a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle,” but freed from the defilements of sin, and prepared to enjoy the never-ending blessedness of the redeemed.

If we are faithful to ourselves, we shall all share in this felicity, and sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. *Christ's love for the Church, and our duties as members of it*, is the subject suggested by the text.

When we speak of the Church of Christ, we mean the Kingdom which He established once for all. As this Kingdom is now, well nigh, nineteen hundred years old, no religious Society established since the times of the Apostles, can, in the same sense, or with equal claims to our respect and veneration, be regarded as His Church.

It is absurd to argue that it is wisely ordered by the Almighty that there should be many divisions among Christians, that thus rival denominations may provoke one another to love and good works. Nay, it is wicked to charge this mournful state of things upon God. He is never the author of confusion, but of peace. The Evil One sows the seed of dissension, and scatters abroad the firebrands of jealousy and strife. Our Saviour only established one Church. He never designed that there should be any other. Indeed, He prayed most earnestly that His followers might all be one. The Apostles plainly taught that it was a grievous sin, to separate from the Church, and even where people have been unwilling to acknowledge this they have reaped the bitter fruits of it in bickerings, and heart-burnings, and decaying piety, and fearful departures from the faith. An American clergyman, not a great while ago, who stood up in John Calvin's pulpit, at Geneva, and repeated the ascription of praise to the Triune God, was told by the gray-haired sexton, that it had been a long time since those sacred words had been heard in that place before.

But why go abroad in search of evidences of the

bad consequences of departing from the ancient safeguards of the Christian faith? Our own country can furnish dismal tokens enough in her hundreds of jarring sects, to convince any candid mind that the unity of the Body of Christ has been most frightfully marred, and that the time has come, when good people of every name, should join in the Saviour's prayer, that all may be one. St. John xvii. 11. "It is common," remarks Dr. Lewis, in his admirable little work on Church Unity, "It is common to represent the various bodies of Christians as only so many regiments of the same army; but if there was no more unity among the regiments of a brigade than there is among sects of Christians, a general at their head would find himself in a strange position. If Christ is to conduct the armies of the Cross to the conquest of the world, we may be sure that it will not be while they are in their present condition; for such a straggling, disconnected army, might well shame and discourage any leader."

The Apostle tells us, that Jesus loved His Church—aye, so loved it, that He gave Himself for it on the Cross. The Psalmist refers to the same everlasting Kingdom, when he declares, "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." lxxxvii. 2.

Isaiah foretells the future glory of this kingdom, in the highest strains of poetic imagery—"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for Me, and the ships of Tarshish first to bring thy sons from far,

their silver and their gold with them, unto the Name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because He hath glorified thee. The sons of them that afflicted Thee shall come bending unto Thee; and all they that despised Thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of Thy feet; and they shall call Thee The City of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy one of Israel." Chap. lx.

If God loved the Church, and if the Saviour bought it with His own most precious blood, surely an institution which was designed for the benefit of man, has a claim, a great and lasting claim, upon his time, his means of usefulness, and the tenderest affections of his heart. All of us, whether our influence be great or small, have duties to perform, with reference to the Kingdom of God. And,

I. First, I remark, that we should *love* the Church.

We do not require to be told that it is our duty to love our kindred, or friends, or that no true-hearted man will fail to love his country. But the Church is much more to us than kindred, or friends, or native land. It is the Body of Christ. It is His affianced Bride. It is the Fold of God, in which the faithful sheep are gathered. It is the Household of Faith. It is God's great School, where his children are to be instructed and trained, for the higher destiny which awaits them in another world.

Nothing short of *love* expresses the feeling which every Christian should cherish for the Church—unfaltering, heartfelt, unaffected love.

II. Again. We should not only love the Church.

but *labor* for it. The word itself suggests the idea of unceasing effort and self-sacrifice; a forgetfulness of present ease and enjoyment, for the sake of the good to be reaped in time to come. To each one, when the implement of labor is placed in his hands, at his Confirmation, the MASTER says, "Son, go work to-day in My Vineyard. The time is short. The night of death cometh when no man can work."

It is a very mistaken idea that the clergy *can, or ought*, to be the only laborers in the Vineyard. The laity should esteem it a great privilege, not merely to provide the means by which the machinery is kept in operation, but they can bear a most important part in the performance of good works. The faithful vestryman, the devoted Sunday-school teacher, the tender and attentive nurse for the sick, the kind and sympathizing friend who visits the poor and the neglected, the thoughtful neighbor who brings another with him to the House of Prayer—are all discharging most important duties, and the results of such labors will be witnessed in the growth and prosperity of the Church on earth, and in everlasting blessedness of souls in Heaven.

O, my friends, rouse yourselves to still greater exertions in a cause so noble and exalted.

The Church of Rome owes far more to the quiet, unobtrusive labors of her Sisters of Charity than to the more showy operations of the Propaganda.

Let the words, which we are accustomed to sing, find some realization in our daily lives:

If e'er to bless thy sons  
 My voice or hands deny,  
 These hands let useful skill forsake,  
 This voice in silence die.

If e'er my heart forget  
 Her welfare or her woe,  
 Let every joy this heart forsake,  
 And every grief o'erflow.

For her my tears shall fall;  
 For her my prayers ascend;  
 To her my toils and cares be given  
 Till toils and cares shall end.

But it is not enough to *love* the Church and to *labor* in its behalf. We must likewise be willing

III. To *suffer* for it. There is no great difficulty in avoiding unpleasant differences with the world, if we do nothing to thwart and oppose it. The Churchman who can bring himself to say, either by word or deed, to any denomination of man's contriving, "You are just as much in the Church as we are; all forms of religion are well enough; it makes no sort of difference where we belong, provided our conduct be proper;" I repeat that the Churchman who would prove so treacherous to his principles as to use such language as this, need have no open enemies, and all men would speak well of him. But many who did thus commend him in word would secretly despise him in their hearts.

The whole world knows what our principles are. The Bible and the Prayer Book teach them, and those

who run may read. If we live up to these principles, boldly and consistently, we may not always be popular, but we shall be what is far better than this—we shall be respected and honored.

At the same time, I grant you, that consistency brings with it troubles and trials, its plausible charges of bigotry and intolerance, and not unfrequently, its full measure of persecution and reproach. But what matters this? If the early martyrs and confessors of the Church bravely faced the terrors of the rack and burning stake, shall we be afraid of the venom of the slanderous tongue? If the great Head of the Church endured not only persecution, but even death itself, that he might redeem it for Himself, shall we be unwilling to suffer in this behalf?

IV. Once more. Every true child of God should be willing, if need be, to *fight* for the Church. Of course I do not mean with sword or spear. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are, nevertheless, mighty for the pulling down of all the strongholds of such as oppose the truth. A good Churchman has the victory in his own hands, if he will but use the means of defence which have been provided for him.

St. Paul tells us that we should always be ready to give an answer to every one who asks us the reason of the hope that is in us, and we can do it with the utmost confidence of success. The youthful Hobart seemed quite unequal to the contest with the intellectual giant who came forth to meet him, arrayed in all the formidable panoply of an ecclesiastical tourna-



ment, and yet the issue showed that the smooth stone from the brook was a missile which no one could safely despise. While I would not venture to encourage a hostile feeling against any body of professing Christians, I must think that our people are most unfaithful to their Church, when they will not take the pains to read and inform themselves about these subjects, and when they will sit quiet and unconcerned, and hear her vilified and abused. Any one who will make himself familiar with the arguments in "Chapman's Sermons," and "Kip's Double Witness," can successfully maintain his ground as a Churchman against assaults from every quarter.

Who can calculate the influence which might be exerted for good, if all who claim to be members of the Church would not only enlighten their own minds in regard to these matters, but would be looking out for suitable occasions for lending books and tracts, and for holding serious conversations with others? A zealous politician leaves no stone unturned in trying to persuade those about him to think as he does. And is it less important that we should endeavor to convince people that God has a Church in the world, and that it is the duty of all to come into it?

To save any one the trouble of putting a wrong interpretation upon my words, I simply add, that while we know that there is only one Church upon the earth, which can claim the LORD JESUS CHRIST as its Founder and Head, we rejoice to believe that many will hereafter come from the East and from the West, and sit down in God's kingdom, who were never formally made

members of His kingdom here. We shall all be judged according to the nature of the privileges which we have enjoyed. Those who were never taught certain duties, which may be quite familiar to us, will certainly never be punished because they failed to practice them. But let it be through no fault of ours that the true light is not everywhere shed abroad.

May this be our only contention—who shall best *love* the Church; who shall *labor* most successfully in its behalf; who shall be most willing to *suffer* for the cause of truth; and who shall *fight* most valiantly. Say not that this is an undue exalting of the Church. The Church is nothing without Christ. The only object of the Church is to bring us to Christ, and to prepare us for His glorious presence hereafter.

## SERMON XXX.

### THE ORIGIN OF THE PRAYER BOOK AND ITS USES.

“I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.”—1 CORINTHIANS xiv. 15.

HENRY CLAY being asked whether he did not think that the Prayer Book had a tendency to produce formality, replied, most emphatically, “Far from it. Indeed, I consider it a great safeguard against it.”

Public worship, in order to be conducted decently, and with becoming dignity and reverence, must of necessity be according to a certain prearranged form. The only question is, Shall we have a good one, or one that is inappropriate and indifferent? Those who are in the habit of attending upon services conducted without a Prayer Book, soon learn the preacher's usual train of thought, and his stereotyped phrases—so that such worship is according to a form, without the advantage of the sober, chastened expression, and the refined taste of a Liturgy composed by martyrs and confessors, and hallowed by the lapse of ages. It is really curious that Christians who have no scruples in using a *form* for the *praise* of the Almighty, should regard *forms* of *prayer* with such dislike and abhorrence.

The question might very reasonably be asked of  
(252)

any Episcopalian, "Where did your Prayer Book come from?" and all should be ready to answer it. The same ignorant persons who tell us, with so much assurance, that our Church was founded by Henry the Eighth, are fond of asserting that the Prayer Book is nothing but a translation of the Romish mass-book. All Churchmen ought to know better than this. The Prayer Book is the growth of ages. The All-wise One knew what arrangement would be best for His creatures, and we find from the Scriptures that the worship in the temple at Jerusalem was according to a prescribed form. There, the Psalms were sung; there, the Law and the Prophets were read; there, the appointed Sacrifices were offered; there, the great Festivals were celebrated;—all these things being conducted by certain well known forms. While our SAVIOUR lived upon the earth, He sanctioned the use of them by His own constant practice, and the Apostles followed His example. He gave them a form of prayer, and in the solemn words of Institution in the Holy Supper, He furnished the groundwork for the office for the Blessed Sacrament which has come down to us. A hymn was sung at the close of the last Supper, and in place of this the Church has for long ages introduced the *Gloria in Excelsis*—made up in a great degree of the song of the Angels on the eve of the first Christmas.

For forty days after His resurrection He gave them directions concerning the future management of His KINGDOM, and on Ascension day, when He returned to the right hand of the FATHER, all things were con-

fided to their care. So far from objecting to the use of forms, they continued for a while to attend upon the services of the Synagogue and the Temple as before,—and it is said of the first converts that they “continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in the prayers” (Acts ii. 42). St. Paul refers to a “*form of sound words*” (2 Timothy i. 13) which it became all to hold fast and cherish with the utmost care. When Churchmen express their belief (on the authority of several of the Apostolical Fathers) that this form was the “Apostles’ Creed,” others shake their heads, and make light of it, as a most absurd idea. We trust they will treat with some respect the opinion of John Calvin, who says, “The ancient writers ascribe the Creed to the Apostles, . . . and whoever was its author, I have no doubt that it has been publicly and universally received as a confession of faith, from the first origin of the Church, and even from the days of the Apostles.”

In the Jewish Synagogue the Law and the Prophets were read, and this was the origin of the time-honored custom of reading two Lessons, the one from the Old, the other from the New Testament. The same Collects, Epistles, and Gospels which we have, are traced back to the earliest days of the Church.

As the Apostles had “one Lord, one Faith, and one Baptism,” so also they had in substance one mode of public worship. All the ancient Liturgies agree in their main features. Four of these ancient forms have been handed down from the first ages, and the Liturgy used by the old British Church (a Church planted in

the times of the Apostles, and hundreds of years before the first Pope was born) was substantially the same as the Liturgy of the Church in Gaul. This Gallic Church, it should be remembered, had its origin from the Church in Asia Minor—and this Church always claimed to have received its Liturgy from St. John, who was once Bishop of Ephesus. At the time of the Reformation, the English Prayer Book was thoroughly sifted, and all Romish corruptions being cleared away, the pure gold of the ancient Liturgies was left; and this is the treasury of devotion, which with such changes as were necessary to adapt it to a Republican form of government, was adopted by our Church in the United States in 1789. The assertion that the Prayer Book is a mere translation of the Romish mass-book is simply absurd. The English Prayer Book was compiled in 1548, and the Romish Missal was not prepared until 1562. It is asking too much that we shall believe that the older book should be a translation of the one which came into existence fourteen years afterwards!

Thus much for the history of the Prayer Book. If we have so far arrested your attention as to lead you to read and inform yourselves thoroughly in regard to it, our purpose is accomplished. We have now something to say concerning its uses. When asked what advantages he hopes to derive from the Prayer Book, the Churchman may answer:

1. That it enables him to do what St. Paul mentions in the text as something most essential to his soul's good, "*to pray with the spirit and with the under-*

*standing also."* In attempting to join in extemporaneous services, one is obliged to wait and see whether the preacher is asking for what he really desires to have—a poor preparation for undisturbed devotion, and an actual encouragement to wandering thoughts. Even if there were few men so lacking in good taste and reverence, as to be delivering eloquent orations in place of humble supplications to the MOST HIGH, still those who offer up extemporaneous prayers in public worship must either prepare them before hand—when they amount to nothing less than a form—or the mind is kept on a painful and anxious stretch, collecting thoughts and choosing words: an exercise most unfavorable for real heart-felt devotion.

2. Another peculiar feature of the Prayer Book is that it embraces, in a reasonable compass, all the requisites for worship. The confession of sin, praise, prayer—each in turn is brought before us—and no one can go away with the impression that his case has been overlooked. Who cannot enter into the spirit of the poor widow, who declared that she loved best to attend the church where the clergyman in the clean white dress prayed so earnestly for her son who had gone to sea?—she, in the innocence of her heart, appropriating all that referred to those who "travelled by land or by water," to his individual case.

3. A third ground of attachment to the Prayer Book, is that the public worship of ALMIGHTY GOD is thus rendered dignified, reverential, and devout. No stranger ever enters an Episcopal church without being most favorably impressed in these respects.

“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth.” Ecclesiastes v. 2.

Men are very careful to draw up petitions in most respectful and becoming words, when they are to be presented to a temporal ruler and judge. And shall less deference be shown in presenting their supplications to the high and mighty Ruler of the Universe? Surely not. And yet the only safeguard against irreverent, familiar, and presumptuous prayers, is the use of forms of devotion. Indeed, so accustomed do some people become to these shocking improprieties, that they cease to observe them. “What liberty our pastor had in praying, this morning,” said a man-worshipping elder, one day. “Why, yes,” replied the Churchman, “I must say I think he took very great liberties.”

4. We cherish the Prayer Book as a most important instrument for good, because it keeps safe and unchanged the great doctrines of the Gospel. Look at the history of any sect or nation which has thrown aside the use of forms of prayer, and see what the result has been. “The great body of the Presbyterian churches established in England about the time of Cromwell, have become decidedly Unitarian.” (Hawes’s *Tribute to the Pilgrims*, p. 84.) A large proportion of the chapels, of the same denomination, at this day, are said by dissenters themselves to be Unitarian in sentiment,—thus “denying the Lord that bought them.” 2 Peter ii. 1.

Germany and Switzerland, the land of Luther and



Calvin, are in the same deplorable condition. "It is undeniable," says the same reliable authority quoted before, "that in every instance abroad, where the Presbyterian form of government has been brought in contact with Unitarianism, it has yielded to the infection. This is found true in Holland, Geneva, France, England, Scotland, and Ireland." Hawes's Tribute, p. 85.

The very society founded by the Pilgrim fathers, on Plymouth Rock, became Unitarian. Take the mournful confessions of Presbyterians and Congregationalists themselves, in regard to the departures from the old doctrines of the Gospel in their Theological Seminaries, and then say whether or not the Episcopal Church has not cause to bless God for the Prayer Book.

5. Again, we prize this golden treasury of devotion because it links us to the generations of the past—now at rest in Paradise. What Churchman can see Washington's pew, in old Christ church, Alexandria, and not feel that it is a privilege that he is permitted to worship the God of his fathers in the same inspired services which aided that good man in his passage through this evil world? Once I passed a quiet delightful Sunday at Stratford-on-Avon, and worshipped in the church where Shakspeare is buried, and where, no doubt, he had borne his part in the solemn services. The same old windows shed their "dim religious light" upon the tombs, and time-stained banners, and mouldering hatchments, as in his day—and the Prayer Book, which was old even then, is still a source

of instruction and refreshment to millions of Christian hearts. And if we prize this ancient legacy, because it associates us thus closely with heroes and poets, how much more precious is it when we remember that saints and martyrs attuned their voices to its inspiring hymns, and poured out their hearts in its Litanies and prayers.

6. A sixth reason for loving the Prayer Book is, that it effectually breaks down all improper distinctions in religion. Prince and peasant, rich and poor, are baptized, married, and buried alike.

“Our mother, the Church, hath never a child  
To honor before the rest,  
But she singeth the same for mighty kings  
And the veriest babe on her breast ;  
And the Bishop goes down to his narrow bed  
As the ploughman’s child is laid,  
And alike she blessed the dark-browed serf  
And the chief in his robe arrayed.

“She sprinkles the drops of the bright new-birth  
The same on the low and high,  
And christens their bodies with dust to dust,  
When earth with its earth must lie ;  
O the poor man’s friend is the Church of Christ  
From birth to his funeral day ;  
She makes him the Lord’s, in her surpliced arms,  
And singeth his burial lay.”

7. Another advantage of the Prayer Book is, that it furnishes the means of public worship for a class of our fellow-creatures who could in no other way find either satisfaction or improvement in attending church.

I refer to the deaf and dumb. If they go to places where a form of prayer is not used, what interest can they be expected to feel? But with the Prayer Book before them, they can follow the different steps in the service without difficulty, standing when others stand, and kneeling when those about them kneel, and though shut out by their infirmity from all direct communication with the outer world, they can make melody in their hearts, and worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Although the same hindrances to the enjoyment of what must be received through the hearing of the ear, do not apply to the blind, it is noteworthy how often they show their good taste by preferring the proprieties of our beautiful forms to the crude performances of men. The rector of a church in Boston observed the attendance of several blind persons at the celebration of Divine service, and their number afterwards increased so much that he was led to inquire into the cause. It appears that an intelligent pupil of the Institution for the Blind had been in the habit of visiting different places of worship, but had at last settled down upon the Episcopal Church, because, as he observed—ignorant that the services were prescribed—*no other ministers make such prayers.* “Here,” as has been beautifully remarked, “here was the tribunal of *Sparta*, with the Judges sitting upon their benches ‘in the dark’—knowing neither friend nor foe in the ‘box’ before them—and *we have heard their verdict!*”

8. We discover a fresh cause of attachment to the Prayer Book, because the interest and variety of the

services fix the attention of children. Suppose them, for a moment, to be in a place where the worship is extemporaneous. They may be interested in finding the hymn, but when it comes to what is emphatically called "the *long* prayer," all standing up, and many looking about them, while the preacher is informing the Almighty of a great variety of matters which He ought to be supposed to know something about without his help, who can wonder that children learn to dread so painful a trial of their patience? The case is hardly made better when a sermon of at least an hour closes these wearisome exercises.

Take the same children to church, and how soon they learn to respond, and how seldom do they manifest any symptoms of fatigue. Their gentle voices are heard in the responses, their little heads are bowed at the Name of JESUS in the Creed, and they kneel, when their parents do, before the gracious throne of their FATHER in Heaven.

10. We cherish the Prayer Book because it has been a source of comfort to multitudes even of those who are not within the one true fold of Christ. Many are the sick persons amongst the various denominations, who have most unfortunately broken off from the old Vine, who draw forth an old Prayer Book used by *their* forefathers, to find in its pages strength and encouragement in the time of need. "It was my father's constant practice," says the daughter of Richard Watson, the eminent Methodist, "when he and my mother were prevented by sickness from attending public worship, to read with her the Church Service,

of which he always expressed himself in the strongest terms of admiration. He would go through the whole service, not omitting the Psalms, the Epistle, and Collect for the day. My mother read the Litany, while my father, devoutly kneeling, responded with the deepest and most fervent devotion." "Read the Te Deum," said the same excellent man, a short time before he died, "it seems to unite one in spirit with the whole Catholic Church in earth and in Heaven."

I was one day returning from a long horseback ride, when a stranger overtook me, and entering into conversation, he remarked that one object of his going to town was to have a book rebound for his sick wife. I had the curiosity to inquire what it was, when he answered that he did not know the name of it, but that it was an excellent book, full of good prayers. While he unwrapped it that he might show it to me, he explained that he and his wife were Presbyterians, and had not much acquaintance with the tenets of other denominations. I took the old tattered book in my hands—a book so highly prized by the poor sick woman, who was a stranger to our Church, that she was going to the expense of having a new cover put on it—when I discovered to my delight that this source of comfort for her years of pain and suffering was the Book of Common Prayer.

11. The same precious Book should be prized for the assistance it affords in private devotion, and for putting into our mouths the language most suitable for humble supplications to a throne of grace. The late lamented Dr. Bedell being asked why it was that

Churchmen could pray so much better than others, answered that it was not owing to superior abilities, but because they were so familiar with the forms of the Church that they became a part of themselves, and the language of prayer was never wanting.

The dying Hammond "composed the irregular and ejaculatory devotion" of his friends, who sought in this way to give him comfort, by saying, "Let us call on God in the voice of His Church." The reply of the saintly George Herbert, in his last hours, to those who inquired what prayers he desired to have offered by his bedside, was touching and beautiful indeed: "O, the prayers of my mother, the Church of England! there are no prayers like them."

12. The Prayer Book ought likewise to be valued next to the Word of God because of the mission for good which it is constantly carrying on, for all classes and conditions of men. The prisoner in his dungeon finds it an instructor and a comforter, when all other sources of instruction and comfort fail. The head of the family calls together his household for morning and evening devotion, and this book supplies the most admirable forms that could be desired. The emigrant, far from the privileges of public worship, assembles his neighbors, and by the aid of this book, they are enabled on God's holy day, to keep alive the flame of true devotion, until a herald of the Cross shall be sent to organize that little company as a church. The captain of the ship takes his place as chaplain, on the deck, and passengers and crew, while uniting in the services of the Prayer Book, are taught to place their

dependence on HIM Who alone spreads out the Heavens and rules the raging of the sea. A regiment goes forth to some distant outpost, and it is the Prayer Book which is to remind the hardy soldier of the religion which he had been taught at his mother's knee, and to be an obedient soldier of the great CAPTAIN of his salvation. A mutinous crew overpower their officers, and turn them adrift on the broad ocean, while they seek a home for themselves on one of the sunny isles of the Pacific. What saves them from spending their days in piracy and murder? The leader of the unprincipled and lawless band finds a Prayer Book in his chest, which reminds him of home, and the old country church, and happier days. He begins public worship. He instructs the children in the Catechism. In due time, the company of desperadoes is transformed, by the grace of God, into an orderly, Christian colony.

13. The last reason which we have time to offer for holding fast to the Prayer Book is, that it serves as a strong bond of union among Christian people, of all nations. Differ as they may about other things, here they stand on common ground. Jealous and belligerent States and nations find their feelings softened towards each other, when they remember that as children of one common FATHER, they are presenting their supplications unto Him in the same "form of sound words." The traveller in foreign lands forgets his distance from home, when he goes up to the sanctuary of God, and hears once more the familiar language of the Book of Common Prayer.

Is it wonderful, my friends, that with all these grounds of attachment for this book, the Churchman should sing with rapture, when dwelling upon the benefits which his holy mother has secured to him, in these ancient services :

“Beyond my highest joy,  
I prize her heavenly ways,  
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,  
Her hymns of love and praise?”

Well may we adopt the glowing words of Dr. South, and say, “I know no prayer necessary, that is not in the Liturgy, but one, which is this: That God would vouchsafe to continue the Liturgy itself in use, honor, and veneration in this Church forever.”



## SERMON XXXI.

### THE WIDOW OF SAREPTA.

“By this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the Word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.”—1 Kings xvii. 24.

IN the history connected with the text—and in all His dealings with His ancient people—we are taught that when some monster of iniquity is alarming the world, God has witnesses for Himself; rare examples of holiness and fidelity. If Israel is cursed with one of the worst of Kings, it is blessed, at the same time, with one of the greatest and best of Prophets.

Ahab's reign was distinguished by his wilful disobedience of the commands of God, and the fearful judgments which this disobedience brought down upon him. He was indeed one of the most depraved monarchs that had occupied the throne of Israel, and his character is thus briefly described by the sacred historian: “Ahab, the son of Omri, did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him.” 1 Kings xvi. 30.

Such conduct could not long go unpunished, and the chapter from which the text is taken, opens by recording the solemn message sent to Ahab, by Elijah the Prophet: “And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall

not be dew nor rain, these years, but according to my word."

Elijah was one of the most distinguished Prophets that had appeared since the time of Moses, and it seemed a wise arrangement of Providence that one of such undaunted courage and ardent zeal should be sent in these evil days.

The Prophet knew full well that the course pursued by this wicked king would end in certain destruction; and in order that the Israelites might be convinced of their dependent condition, and brought back to their allegiance to the Almighty, he prayed that a signal punishment might be inflicted, to convince them of God's hatred of sin.

The time which the drought lasted is not mentioned in this place, but our blessed Lord, in one of His discourses, speaks of the "great famine," in the days of Elias, "when the heaven was shut up *three years and six months*." St. Luke iv. 25.

God does not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men, and we have a sad proof of our proneness to evil in the fact that it is chiefly when His "*judgments* are in the earth, the inhabitants will learn righteousness." Isaiah xxix. 9.

When the pride of King Ahab was brought down, and his rebellious subjects had humbled themselves in the dust, the same prophet who had prayed earnestly that it might not rain, prayed again, with a glad and swelling heart, and "the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." 1 St. James v. 17, 18.

As soon as the Prophet had delivered his message,

the Word of the Lord came unto him, saying: "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there." 1 Kings xvii. 3, 4. We need hardly add that the command was instantly obeyed. You can readily picture to yourselves the Prophet wrapped in his hairy mantle—the blue sky above him—"the stone his seat, the grass his couch; his company the purling brook, and the hoarse ravens aloft among the trees." Krummacher.

The Almighty *could* have provided for the wants of His servant in many other ways; but He seems to have employed these voracious birds to administer to Elijah's wants, to show forth most plainly the greatness of His power.

Unbelievers have often scoffed at this portion of sacred history, and attempts have been made to get rid of the miracle by asserting that the Prophet was not fed by ravens, but by the inhabitants of Orbo, a small town near Bethshan. But there is every reason for believing the simple statement as given in our English version. "It is expressly said that Elijah *drank of the brook Cherith*. Had strangers brought him food, they might as well have furnished him water; and thus it would not have been necessary for him to have removed when the brook dried up. Again, Ahab (who had sent messengers in pursuit of the Prophet among the neighboring kingdoms and nations) took an oath of them that they were ignorant of the

place of his concealment (1 Kings xviii. 10); and some one out of a tribe, we may suppose it probable, would have delivered him up, seeing that they could gain nothing by his concealment, and had every thing to fear from detection. If we come to verbal criticism, we find that the word is precisely the same with that which is most properly rendered 'raven' in Genesis viii. 7, when Noah sends a bird out of the Ark." Myer's Hulsean Essay, p. 93. The ravens acted by Divine direction, and it was therefore God himself Who provided food for His servant.

No true child of God will ever be deserted by Him. Pestilence may sweep over the land; the early dew and refreshing rain no longer come down to water the earth; the fig-tree may lose its blossoms; the labor of the olive fail; the fields yield no meat; and the flock be cut off from the fold; yet the faithful Christian can rejoice in the Lord; he can joy in the God of his salvation.

Month after month rolled away, and we still find the Prophet occupying his lonely retreat. Morning and evening he comes forth from the rude cave, beneath the overhanging rocks, and partakes of the food which the ravens bring—perhaps from the very altars of the priests of Baal, which they little thought would feed an avenging Prophet of the Lord.

He watches with anxiety the brook Cherith,\* as it diminishes day by day, until the dry and stony bed

\* Robinson's Biblical Researches in Palestine, vol. I., p. 558. and Stanley's Sinai and Palestine, pp. 299 and 496; compare these accounts with Josephus's Antiq. B. viii. chap. xiii. 2

are the only marks to show where once the stream had been. But his faith failed not; and when, to morals like ourselves, Elijah's fate seemed sure, his Heavenly Benefactor had made new provision for his wants.

"And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there; behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." 1 Kings xvii. 8, 9. This place was afterwards called Sarepta, and stood on the coast of the Mediterranean, between Tyre and Sidon.

Obedient to the Divine direction, Elijah went forth, and as he approached the gate of the city, he saw the widow gathering sticks. Wayworn and weary, but with the calmness of unwavering faith, he called to her, and said: "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." v. 10.

She cheerfully set out to perform this act of mercy, when the Prophet stopped her and said: "Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand." v. 11. Her deplorable poverty could not be concealed, and she accordingly answered, "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and behold I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die." v. 12

The effects of drought and famine were felt in Zidon, as well as in the land of Israel, and trifling as the request of the Prophet was, it was more than the poor widow could grant. How amazed she must have been when he said, with the confidence of one who

knew the power and goodness of the Almighty: "Fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth." v. 13, 14. The widow knew that what God had promised He would faithfully perform; she did not hesitate for a moment to do as she was told, and the Prophet, and her starving household, were miraculously provided with food for "many days."\* "In her utmost want—about to cook her last morsel and die—she yet listens to the call of humanity, brings water for the thirsty Prophet, and shares with him her final meal. Go and do likewise. In hours of greatest darkness and destitution share with those more needy than yourself, and let the morrow take thought for itself. Who does not often need the lesson to prompt his reluctant soul to deeds of charity, and the result to fortify his feeble faith?" *The Land and the Book*, vol. I. p. 236.

Real Benevolence is never anxious to find excuses for turning a deaf ear to the importunate appeal for help. The poor widow might have urged her own extremity of want, as a reason for refusing to comply with Elijah's request. And even when he assured

\* "*Many days*" must here mean *two years*. One year had been spent by the brook Cherith, before it dried up. The expression, in verse 7th, "after a while," is shown by Patrick to signify "at the end of days," i. e., of a year. See his Commentary, vol. I.

her, in the name of God, that her kindness should be well repaid, would not a distrustful, doubting spirit have shrewdly argued: "If this man be really able to do such wonderful things for me, how is it that he is so completely helpless to relieve his own necessities?" But no such skeptical thought was cherished. She looked with compassion upon the weary Prophet, who seemed ready to perish with hunger, and turning away in silence, "went and did according as he had said."

Our blessed Lord has taught us that even "a cup of cold water," given "in the name of a disciple," and out of love to Him (an offering so simple that the poorest may enjoy the privilege of doing good), "shall by no means go unrewarded." St. Matt. x. 42.

The duty of considering ourselves as stewards, who must render a strict account of the talents entrusted to us, seldom enters our minds. If people cultivate some of the Christian virtues, and bestow a small portion of their property to advance the interests of the Gospel, they think that this is all which is expected of them. How different is this from the devotion of soul and body to the service of our Master, which He positively enjoins; and what a mere apology are such puny exertions, for the self-sacrificing spirit which distinguishes true Christian benevolence! The widow of Sarepta, and she who in our Saviour's time cast her mite into the Lord's treasury, have left us an example recorded purposely for our imitation.

But to continue the history. Though it may not seem necessary to raise conjectures here upon this event, yet it is natural to suppose the danger of the

famine being thus unexpectedly got over, that the mother began to look hopefully forward upon the rest of her days. There were many widows in Israel at that time, when the Heavens were shut up for three years and six months, yet, as St. Luke observes, "to none of them was he sent save to this widow of Sarepta." In all likelihood she would not be the last in making the same observation, and drawing from it some flattering conclusion in favor of her son. Many a parent would build high on a worse foundation. "Since the God of Israel has thus sent His own messenger to us in our distress, to pass by so many houses of His own people and stop at mine, to save it in so miraculous a manner from destruction, doubtless this is but an earnest of His future kind intentions to us; at least His goodness has decreed to comfort my old age by the long life and health of my son; but, perhaps, He has something greater still in store for him; and I shall live to see the same Hand hereafter crown his head with glory and honor." We may naturally suppose her innocently carried away with such thoughts, when she is called back by an unexpected distemper, which surprises her son, and in one moment brings down all her hopes: "for his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him."\*

\* Sterne's Sermons, No. 5. It is painful to remember how much better the *preaching* of the author of "A Sentimental Journey" was, than his *practice*. The above paragraph is only a specimen of many others which may be found in his discourses—showing, as Gray, the poet, remarks, "a strong imagination and a sensible heart."



The mother, almost distracted with grief, said unto the Prophet: "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?"

Elijah was greatly moved by this appeal, and said: "Give me thy son!" and gently taking the child from her arms, carried him to an upper room, and "laid him upon his own bed." How earnestly he prayed! "And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord, my God, hast Thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?" v. 20. Thrice did the man of God stretch himself upon the body of the child, and thrice beseech the Lord, and say, "I pray Thee, let this child's soul come into him again." v. 21.

The Prophet's prayer was heard, and with holy joy he delivered him to his mother. We can almost fancy that we are spectators of this solemn scene. The lifeless body of the child; the disconsolate parent; the anxious Prophet, are all before us. No enchanter's wand, no human skill are called into requisition. The Prophet of the Most High, acting in God's appointed way, by the use of means powerless in themselves, restores the dead to life. The miracle was indeed the work of Omnipotence, but it was through the instrumentality of man—of weak and erring man—the commissioned agent of a holy God.

It may be asked whether the most faithful prayers on the part of the Lord's ministering servants, can be effectual *now* to accomplish the same results. In reply to such an inquiry, I say, first, that faithful prayer for

what God has promised, will always secure a favorable answer. God had commissioned Elijah to work miracles, and was wont to give a miraculous efficacy to his prayers.

Secondly, I remark, that if a miracle be necessary, in order to the fulfilment of God's promise, He will work it now, in answer to believing prayer.

And thirdly, that the converting and saving of men's souls, by "the foolishness of preaching," is a constant miracle.

This point established, it will be well to notice the wisdom which has been manifested in the arrangement of the Lessons from Holy Scripture. In connection with the history before us, the Church directs us to read\* the third chapter of St. John's Gospel, which contains our Saviour's conversation with Nicodemus. But why is this? Because our holy Mother wishes to bring together the different parts of the Bible, and show that "the Old Testament is not contrary to the New" (Article vii.,) but that in both the same doctrines are revealed; the same God held up for our fear and love; the same obedience to His commands required of people in every age and clime. In this portion of St. John's Gospel we find another illustration of the truth, just drawn from the history of Elijah. Our Lord tells Nicodemus, that "Except one be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Afterwards, we find Him commissioning His Apostles (and through them, their successors

\* Morning Lessons for the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

until the end of time) to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the triune Jehovah. In this case God's commissioned ambassador, acting by His direction and in His appointed way, is permitted to impart (as the humble instrument of God's Holy Spirit, ever present with His Church) to his fellow-man, "dead in trespasses and sins," the seeds of a new life, and by this official act, our Prayer Book tells us, he is made "regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church." If this be a miracle, so is the conversion of a sinner. If this be a miracle, it is one wrought by the power of God's Spirit; and is there anything too hard for Him?

We return, once more, to the history. "And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the Word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth!" It would be wrong to suppose that the widow was not fully convinced before that Elijah was a true servant of God. For "many days" she and her household had been miraculously provided with food; but the astonishing exhibition of Divine power, in calling the dead to life, drew from her grateful heart a fresh and full acknowledgment that he was indeed a Prophet of the Lord.

Many, in later times, were convinced by our Saviour's miracles, that He was "a Teacher sent from God;" but the larger proportion of the Jewish nation shut their eyes to the clearest proofs of His Divinity, and refuse to believe in Him, even after He rose from the dead. We are amazed at their blindness, and can

hardly conceive it possible that men *could* resist the evidence which was afforded them.

But is there not a similar infidelity prevalent among us? Men may not indeed deny the existence of a God, but they refuse to receive many of the plainest doctrines of His holy Word. Some doubt the personality of the Blessed Spirit. Some endeavor to strip the eternal Son of the attributes of Deity. Some profess themselves unable to find in the Scriptures the doctrine of future punishment, and to believe that the gates of Paradise will hereafter be opened wide to all. The Church, in those Creeds which are the united testimony to the Faith, given by her children in all times and places, has settled these points beyond a doubt (if any thing be settled), and the pen of inspiration, in a single sentence, has given the death-blow to such extravagant hopes as these: "The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." St. Matt. xxv. 46. The same word which is here employed to describe the eternal bliss of the faithful, expresses also the unending misery of the lost.

He who heard the Prophet's cry, and raised the widow's son; Who called Lazarus from the grave, and became "the first fruits of them that slept," shall one day come as a final Judge, and they "that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Daniel xii. 2. God now commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent, and the reward of obedience will be a crown of glory which can never fade.

We read in the Gospel of our Saviour's transfiguration on the Mount (St. Matt. 17), and of Moses and Elias who appeared also in shining array, and talked with Him concerning His approaching crucifixion. The same humble Prophet, whom we left just now sharing the obscure lot of the widow of Sarepta, and comforting her in sorrow, comes in garments of light from the abodes of Paradise, to hold mysterious converse with the Son of God.

Faithful continuance in well-doing will secure to us also, my friends, glory and honor and immortality. Even in this life, "the barrel of meal shall not waste," nor "the cruse of oil fail," which are drawn upon for deeds of mercy and love ; but a bountiful Providence shall bless us in basket and in store. And when lying on the bed of sickness and death, that peace which passeth all understanding, shall afford a foretaste of happiness yet to come.

## SERMON XXXII.

ANGER: ITS LAWFUL LIMITS, AND THE WAY TO GOVERN IT.

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.”—PROVERBS xvi. 32.

PETER the Great once made a law, that if any nobleman ill-treated his servants, he should be looked upon as insane, and a guardian should be appointed to take care of his person and estate.

This distinguished monarch once struck his gardener, who, being a man of tender sensibilities, took to his bed; and died in a few days. Peter, hearing of this, exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, “Alas! I have civilized my own subjects; I have conquered other nations; yet I have not been able to civilize or to conquer myself!”

It would be hard to find one so dead to the world, as not to feel his pulse beat quicker, and his energies bestir themselves, at the report of some brilliant victory, by land or sea. It would be easy to point out thousands who would glory at the thought of being actors in such scenes. The spirit of heroism seems inborn. Many grow restless and unhappy, because no field is spread out in which it can be properly exercised. This is a serious mistake. There is ample room for the efforts of the bravest and the best. No

child of Adam need find himself unemployed. "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

Where can ambition point to a higher object to be gained ?

An old definition of anger is "*Short madness.*" This, considered without regard to times or circumstances, is quite too broad. That anger is not always sinful, is plain from the fact that it is a passion sometimes ascribed to the High and Holy One. Thus, the Psalmist says, "God is angry with the wicked every day." (vii. 11.) But, of course, such expressions are merely figurative, and are used with reference to the Almighty because He punishes wrongdoers with the severity of a superior provoked to anger.

When anger is selfish, it should be most carefully restrained. Sometimes it is disinterested, and circumstances may easily be imagined, in which it would be perfectly lawful.

We inherit this passion at our birth. As a safety-valve, to allow our inward heart-burnings and ill-humors to escape, it is most essential to our peace. But it should always be kept under due restraint. The maxim which one of the seven wise men of Greece left as a memorial of his knowledge and benevolence was, "Be master of thy anger !"

The importance of this rule must be felt by all who have experienced in their own case the ill effects of an ungoverned temper, or witnessed them in others.

The little spring, resting so quietly in its mountain bed, has only to send its trifling tribute to the neigh-

boring brook, and this again to the swollen river, to produce, at last, a troubled sea, lashed into fury by the winds, and breaking in sullen murmurs on the shore. So too with the passions in man's breast, easy to be managed, as a general thing: dangerous, if suffered to prevail; overturning, in their madness, all the wholesome restraints of law, and fearing no opposing power, human or divine.

People who are really well disposed, are thus sometimes taken off their guard. An unimportant circumstance, perhaps, disturbs the mind. The slightest movement of anger produces warmth. Additional provocation, however trifling, fans the embers, and warmth is turned to glowing heat. A few moments more, and the combustible material, so thoroughly prepared, shoots up in a brilliant blaze. The Psalmist has most accurately marked these several steps: "My heart was hot within me, and while I was thus musing, the fire kindled, and at last I spake with my tongue." Psalm xxxix. 3.

Did one look no further than to his own sense of mortification when a burst of passion has spent itself, he should be careful to quench the spark at its first appearance. But this is a very small part of the mischief. It is the direct cause of serious inconvenience and wrong to others. "It is a common expression," says Addison, in the *Spectator* (No. 438), "that such a one is very good-natured, but very passionate. The expression, indeed, is very good-natured, to allow passionate people so much quarter; but I think a passionate man deserves the least indulgence imaginable. It



is said, it is soon over; that is, all the mischief he does is quickly despatched, which is no great recommendation to favor. I have known one of those good-natured passionate men to say in a mixed company, even to his own wife and child, such things as the most inveterate enemy of his family would not have spoken. He will, in an instant, assemble together so many allusions to secret circumstances, as are enough to dissolve the peace of all the families and friends he is acquainted with, in a quarter of an hour—and yet, the next moment, be the best natured man in the world.”

This is an every-day occurrence. There are few persons who have not witnessed such disgraceful scenes. And what excuse can be urged for them? Anger, under ordinary circumstances, *can* be restrained, and it *should* be. But do not suppose that this necessity grows out of expediency, merely, or a regard to the rules of good society. It rests upon higher ground, *the known will of God*. A parent, or guardian, or teacher, or minister, who cannot govern his temper, loses at least half the influence he might exert, and not unseldom destroys it altogether. Permit me to remind you of some of the ways in which anger may be improperly indulged.

1. First, *it is wrong to be angry without cause*. Our Saviour says in His sermon on the Mount, “Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment.” St. Matt. v. 22.

Oftentimes the quick-tempered are enraged against their best friends, when no offence has been given or

intended. The supposed affront all originates in the imagination of the rash and hasty one.

"Your teachers tell you," said our Lord to the Jews of old, "that the commandment of God is 'Thou shalt not kill;' but I go much further than this. I say that it is wrong to indulge resentment against thy brother; thou shalt not use any reproachful or contemptuous language towards him; for these are the things that lead and provoke to the most atrocious deeds."

2. Again, *anger is wrong when it is carried too far, no matter how sufficient the cause by which it was first aroused*. The patriarch Jacob refers to such a case, in his dying prediction concerning the future conduct of his sons—"Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. In their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel." Genesis xlix. 5-7.

Jacob had in view their bloody conspiracy against the Shechemites. By turning to the history in the book of Genesis (chap. 34), you will see that although they had good reason to be angry, their indignation hurried them on too fast and too far.

Sin, under its various forms, exists everywhere, but there are particular classes of sins which prevail to a greater extent in one region than another. In mild climates, it is often observed that a slight affront will be followed by a blow, while the less passionate inhabitants of colder regions would pass it by unnoticed. The government of reason seems lost at once. Death

by the dagger or the bullet is the common mode of avenging their petty wrongs.

The *laws of honor* may sanction such a course. The *laws of God* forbid it. Which should wise men choose?

3. I remark, in the next place, that anger is wrong *when it proceeds from sinful causes, such as pride, or unreasonable dislikes*. "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue (says the wise man) keepeth his soul from troubles. Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath." Prov. xxi. 23, 24.

It is no uncommon thing for people to become vexed, with little or no provocation, and afterwards, when the judgment has returned to its lawful seat, and they discover that they have done wrong, to be too proud to acknowledge their error, or to take any steps towards making peace with a neighbor, or a friend. Such behavior can be attributed to nothing else but littleness of soul. A man of sound sense, and a warm heart, will always be glad to heal such unfortunate disturbances, even at the expense of some personal mortification and inconvenience.

4. Again, *anger is wrong when it is accompanied with improper language*. An instance of this is found in the history of the meekest of men. The Psalmist says that the Israelites, amongst their other offences, "angered God at the waters of strife, so that He punished Moses for their sakes; because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips." Ps. cvi. 32, 33. The people had shown themselves so utterly hardened and debased, that Moses could contain him-

self no longer, and when about to perform a most wonderful miracle for their relief, he exclaimed in his haste, "Hear, now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" Numbers xx. 10. He had much cause to be offended, but this was no excuse for his angry words. No doubt he was sorry afterwards, that his temper had thus led him to play the fool; but there was no remedy. He had been guilty of the sin. His example must, of course, have been a serious injury to those who witnessed it. The punishment deserved could not properly be turned aside. He was not suffered to enter the promised land.

If Moses, whose character, in the main, was so free from glaring faults, paid this sad penalty for indulging wrath, can those be safe who, with fewer claims to God's favor, are guilty of his sin, and oftentimes in more aggravated forms?

5. Anger is also wrong *when it indisposes us from holy duties*. You often hear persons say, that they are so indignant at some insult, so enraged at another's words or deeds, that they cannot go to church, or receive the Lord's Supper, or that they can find no comfort in their prayers.

This shows that they are allowing a wound to fester and inflame, which, by a different course, might easily be cured. In such a case, anger is not only a sin, but a torment from which they themselves suffer most.

6. Once more. Anger is wrong *when it is suffered to last too long*. The wisest and best of men are sometimes overtaken by anger, but it only "resteth in the bosom of fools." Eccles. vii. 9. Hence the Apostle

while assuring us that such a feeling is sometimes proper, takes pains to add, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Ephes. iv. 26.

Two good men, on some occasion, had a warm dispute; and remembering this exhortation of St. Paul, just before sunset one of them went to the other, and knocking at the door, his offended friend came and opened it, and seeing who it was, started back in astonishment. The other, at the same time, cried out, "The sun is almost down." This unexpected salutation softened the heart of his friend, and he promptly answered, "Come in, brother, come in!"

Happy would it be for the world if the rules of the Gospel were always thus promptly obeyed.

My task would be left unfinished, if I neglected to remind you of the best mode of keeping anger under due restraint. There is an old and wise rule, to "Think twice before you speak once." The man who observes it has learned one secret of happiness and prosperity.

A great relief, when soured and chafed, is found in turning our thoughts into a different channel. Let them be busied about some pleasant subject, but "chiefly," remarks Dr. South, "upon such things as are peculiar and proper antidotes against the grudge conceived. As, let a man remember whether he never received a courtesy from the person whom he thinks has provoked him; and let him consider, whether that courtesy did not outweigh the present injury, and was not done with greater circumstances of kindness, than this of disrespect." Sermons, Vol. IV. p. 293.

It will also be well to notice whether we have not, unknown to ourselves, been growing peevish and complaining; whether we have not placed too high an estimate upon our acquirements and importance, and the deference which we think should be paid to us; and whether we may not have given some offence, which has prompted the ill-usage of which we so loudly complain.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Prov. iv. 23. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Ephes. iv. 31, 32.

If you forget every other rule, remember to pray to God to give you a meek and patient spirit. It is said of Robert Hall, that in the earlier part of his public career, he was easily provoked; but if he lost his temper, he was deeply humbled, and would frankly confess his fault. On one of these occasions, when a discussion had waxed warm, he suddenly closed the debate, and retiring to a remote part of the room, where he thought himself unobserved, was heard to ejaculate, with deep feeling, "O Lamb of God! calm my troubled spirit!"

It is gratifying to the heart of man to accomplish something which can be accounted great. I have shown you, how each one may be thus employed. "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

## SERMON XXXIII.

### LYING UNTO THE HOLY GHOST.

“Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”—Acts v. 4.

A BEAUTIFUL picture is given in the Book of Acts, of the simplicity and purity of the Church in primitive times. Then, Christians were not satisfied with a *weekly* attendance at the sanctuary of God, or with a cold and heartless service, but *daily* met to unite in prayer and praise.

Believers formed but one family, distributing of their possessions among the poor and needy, and “continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Acts. ii. 42. The opinion was prevalent that the Jewish nation would soon be destroyed. As a means of preventing their little company from being scattered abroad, and to contribute alike to the comfort of all, they held their property “in common” (ii. 44), and thus were knit more closely together, “in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.” Ephes. iv. 3.

This relinquishment of private property for the public good was not obligatory upon any, and the cheerfulness with which the sacrifice was made, showed the sincerity of their profession, and the steadfastness

of their faith. Let it not be supposed, however, that any countenance is here given to those modern associations of Socialists, whose professed object is to advance the happiness and prosperity of such as engage in them ; but which prove, in all cases, the most fruitful sources of dissension, infidelity and vice.

The early Church at Jerusalem was formed under peculiar circumstances. A large number of foreign Jews had here been convinced that JESUS was the Messiah, and they were naturally desirous of remaining for a time in the holy city, that they might become more thoroughly acquainted with the peculiarities of the Christian Church.

There were also many poor members of the Church who were inhabitants of Jerusalem, and it was to relieve these two classes, that the rich not only gave of their abundance, but some even sold their possessions to raise money for this charitable object. The intercommunity of goods was a mere voluntary thing, and it is plain that all did not make this sacrifice, since the two classes of rich and poor are mentioned soon afterwards. Acts xi. 29, and xx. 35. There is also good reason for believing that none but *Jews* thus sold their possessions. The *Gentiles* did not follow the example, when the Gospel was preached among them, and St. Paul nowhere recommends it. The Jews who became Christians were under the impression that their nation would speedily be destroyed, and they therefore made such use of their property as appeared most fitting under the circumstances.

While we have been thus particular in showing that



the ancient system of intercommunity of goods bore no resemblance to the modern associations for promoting the well-being of society, we should be neglecting a plain duty, if we failed to notice what a complete caricature of primitive benevolence is suffered to pass in our day as Charity, and that, so far from coming up in any degree to the Gospel standard, it can really lay no claim to its title or reward.

Blessed be God, a scattered few are even now to be met with, who have faith in the promises of God, and are willing to lend unto Him. He will recompense them a hundred fold in this present world, and their reward will be abundant in that day when He makes up His jewels.

To return to the history. As even in the family of our Divine Master a Judas was found to betray his Lord, so heré an example is given of the sinful nature of man yielding to the temptations of Satan. Doubtless those who sold their estates and provided for the wants of the needy, were regarded with respect and admiration. This being the case, it is not strange that some should be led from improper motives to make partial sacrifices, in order to gain a similar reputation. The blighting effects which such hypocrisy would have upon the Church must be evident to all, and the goodness of God is clearly seen in the sudden check given to this dangerous evil. Ananias and Sapphira, desirous of securing that respect which liberality to the poor obtained for others, sold a possession, and having secreted part of the money, gave the remainder to the Apostles as the whole price of the land. By this base

fraud, they expected to be supported out of the public treasury, retain a portion of the property for their private use, and at the same time gain the applause of their fellow-men. They, as well as others, had witnessed the wonderful effects which the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT had produced on the Disciples; they knew that God had endued them with power from on high; and yet they vainly hoped to deceive the Omniscient ONE and His chosen servants. But God searcheth the heart, and from Him no secrets are hid. He saw the covetousness and hypocrisy which prompted this deliberate falsehood, and by the mouth of the Apostle pronounced His terrible sentence. "Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own, and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God!" The miserable man and his guilty wife were speechless, and both, without a moment's warning, were called to answer for their crime at a higher tribunal.

You have all, from childhood, heard and read this history over and over, and you have no doubt felt something of that "fear" which filled the minds of those who witnessed this terrible judgment; and at each recital of the sad event, have wondered how people could be guilty of such awful sins.

But it has probably never occurred to you, that many in our own day are committing the same offence,

and if they do not speedily repent, will meet with a fearful doom.

In an age like the present, when persecution, with the rack and burning stake, no longer deters the timid from confessing Christ before men; when the great, and the wise, and the mighty, are flocking to the ranks of the faithful, it is not strange that improper motives should influence some to declare themselves on the Lord's side. Far from being a disgrace, to be a Christian is now respectable, and not a few, it is to be feared, embrace our holy religion to advance their worldly interests, secure a lucrative and honorable office, or acquire a reputation for honesty and integrity.

God grant that none who minister in holy things may ever be guilty of this awful sin! Let none who are not "inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them this office and ministry," presume to serve at the sacred altar, lest they plead in vain, at the last, "Lord, have we not taught in Thy Name, and done many wonderful works!" He will surely say to such, "Depart! in My sight your hypocrisy is plain. Ye have not lied unto men, but unto God!"

Will not our Saviour's description of "whited sepulchres" (St. Matt. xxiii. 2) apply to some who are enjoying the reputation of good and upright people? Are none accustomed to come up to the House of Prayer, and to pay due regard to the externals of religion, who neglect the study of the Bible, and private devotion, repentance, and amendment of life; who have "a form of godliness," but "deny the power" thereof; and having "a name to live, are dead" in

trespasses and sins? Do none confine their acts of charity to public exhibitions of benevolence, that they may have praise of men?

Have any been stretched on the bed of pain and languishing, and there promised if God would raise them up, to amend their ways and live to Him; but when in mercy He heard their prayer, and restored them again to health, have forgotten their vow, and gone on still in their wickedness? Have not some when watching by the bed of sickness and death; or while paying the last sad offices of love at the grave of a friend, secretly resolved that prayer and the reading of God's Word, and a regular attendance on the services of the Sanctuary should no longer be neglected, but before the grass has sprung up on the grave of that friend, have forgotten this resolution, and gone back to the world?

Have any presented themselves before God as sponsors for their children, when they were consecrated to His service in holy Baptism, and neglected at the proper age to have them ready to be confirmed? Are there any here who have received the Bishop's blessing in the Apostolic rite of "laying on of hands," and in the presence of God, and the assembly of His worshipping people, renewed "the solemn promise and vow that ye made at your Baptism, ratifying and confirming the same; and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and to do all those things which ye then undertook, or your sponsors then undertook for you," and, in the very face of this public profession of the religion of JESUS, have stopped short in your

Christian course, and are now living in the neglect of the Holy Communion?

Have any approached the table of the Lord, who had not "truly and earnestly repented" of their past sins; who were not in love and charity with their neighbor, and who did not honestly intend by God's grace to lead new and better lives, obeying His commandments, and walking henceforward in His holy ways?

What multitudes are *nominal* Christians from interest, or to keep up appearances; who come to church if the weather is favorable, and no private engagement stands in the way; but who in reality, have no fear of God, and no love for man; who make light of fasting, and almsgiving, and self-examination, and private devotion; who, when in God's House, unite mechanically in the prayers and praises, and only listen with patience to His ambassador when he prophesieth smooth things, and even then are content to *hear* his words, but *do* them *not*!

Such persons may deceive their fellow-men; their cloak of hypocrisy impose upon the ministers of Christ; their ostentatious observance of the lesser duties of religion lead many to suppose that they are Christians indeed; but the *guilt* of Ananias is on their souls! They "have not lied unto men, but unto God."

Let them take heed lest the *punishment* of Ananias fall suddenly upon them! God's judgments may be delayed, but He has solemnly declared, that "The wicked shall not go unpunished." Jeremiah xlix. 12. Although mercy and forbearance may prolong the

day of grace, His SPIRIT shall not always strive. Genesis vi. 3.

To each self-deceiver, He is saying now, "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" You may be quite unconcerned, and persuade yourselves that no danger is to be apprehended. But a day is surely coming, when all the past shall be reviewed, and every sinful thought, and word, and work, disclosed. The trumpet sounds. The dead awake. The judgment is set. The books are opened.

"In the grave  
The hypocrite has left his mask, and stands  
In naked ugliness. He was a man  
Who stole the livery of the court of Heaven,  
To serve the Devil in. . . . .  
At sacred feast, he knelt among the saints,  
And with his guilty hands touched holy things.  
On charitable lists . . . . .  
He blazed his name, more pleased to have it there,  
Than in the Book of Life."

But mark his doom. Already

———"There is heard coming from out the pit,  
The hollow wailing of eternal death,  
And horrid cry of the undying worm!"

The wicked, in awful silence, await the sentence of the JUDGE,—“Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!”  
“Ye have not lied unto men, but unto GOD!”

May GOD of His infinite mercy, save us from this doom, through JESUS CHRIST, our LORD!

## SERMON XXXIV.

### PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY.

“Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?”  
—JEREMIAH xlii. 20.

NONE of us fully realize our solemn accountability to God. Not only shall we be held responsible for our own actions, but, to a certain extent, for the actions of others. All under our influence or control have a right to expect of us *good example*, as well as timely and wholesome *advice*. The pastor, the parent, the sponsor, the guardian, and the teacher, may live in utter forgetfulness of this obligation, but it nevertheless exists, and the issues of the last awful day will depend, in no small degree, upon the manner in which it has been discharged.

The subject addresses itself most pointedly to you and to me, my friends, and it becomes us to give good heed to it.

At his ordination, every minister of God is put in charge of a portion of the Lord's “flock.” He takes a most solemn oath, at the altar, that he will be faithful to his trust. He promises to be diligent, in season and out of season, in looking after the welfare of his people; and that he will “seek for CHRIST's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through

Christ forever." (Exhortation in *The Ordering of Priests*.)

A clergyman may prove unfaithful to this vow, but it will be at the peril of his soul. "I pity the man," said the great Dr. Johnson, "who ventures to make the office of the sacred ministry an easy one!"

Who can conceive of the terrible anguish which will seize upon the unfaithful pastor, when called to give in his account at the bar of the ETERNAL JUDGE? The Book of God's remembrance will be opened, in which all his sins of omission and commission are recorded, and the searching question will be asked: "*Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?*"

It is because I remember *that* account, that I shall do my utmost to be faithful to you. I have promised to watch over the sheep of my Heavenly MASTER, and to feed HIS lambs, and woe is me if they wander from the fold, or suffer in any particular, from my neglect! When, therefore, a pastor endeavors to stir up the minds of parents, and all others who are entrusted with the care and training of children, he should never be suspected of unkindness, because he uses great earnestness of manner, and plainness of speech. He is only trying to save his own soul, and the souls of those who hear him.

There are hundreds and thousands of most unhappy people, dwelling in Christian lands, who have no religious principles: who are strangers to the comforts enjoyed by true believers, and who are without hope of happiness hereafter. In very many cases, their condition is owing entirely to the want of early religious



instruction, and that careful, unwearied, judicious training, which parents are expected to give. Not a few of these persons have been brought to this sad condition by the *mistakes* which well-meaning guardians and instructors have made. Gentleness has been lacking; or too much has been attempted at once; or parental *example* has not harmonized well with parental instruction; or too much dependence has been placed on *human* agencies, and too little on the power of God's HOLY SPIRIT. A single illustration will make our meaning plain: One day, a gentleman, accompanied by his son, a well-grown lad, appeared at the dwelling of a venerable teacher, of Wirtemberg, Germany, with whom the father requested a private interview. After informing the instructor that he had brought the boy to place him under his care, he went on to say, "I must give you to understand that my son is a desperate lad, upon whom, hitherto, all instructions and corrections have been lost. I have admonished him, I have whipped him, I have shamed him before company, but he still remains as bad as ever; praise and blame are equally unavailing."

The teacher inquired whether he had sought for no other remedies.

"O, yes," replied the father; "I have sometimes kept him on bread and water for two days in succession!"

"Have you tried nothing else?" asked the other.

"Yes," said the father, "I have exposed him to the cold."

Upon being further questioned, he mentioned other measures which had been resorted to, but without any

good effect. He had in vain employed mild means to bring him to reason, such as allowing him to go into the company of well-behaved children; but the stubborn lad would either shock his little associates by his rudeness, or avail himself of the first favorable moment for making his escape into the street, where more congenial play-mates could be found.

The old teacher looked grave, and said that he knew of a better remedy than these, for such desperate cases, and that was *prayer*. He asked the unhappy parent whether he had ever deliberately kneeled down before God, and prayed *with* his son and *for* him. The reply was, that he had not.

"Then," observed the good old man, "it need not seem strange that all your efforts have been to no purpose."

The sequel of the story is soon told. The desperate lad was left at the school; this most important means was diligently used; God's blessing was not withheld; and he who had occasioned his friends so much anguish of heart, grew up to be an excellent and useful man.

It would certainly be very wrong to conclude that *all* parents who are so unfortunate as to have disobedient and evil-minded children, have been wanting in affection for them, and have not attempted, after some sort, to bring them up in the way they should go. But they have erred in judgment; or they have grown weary in their work; or they have not had nerve enough to carry out the wise rules which they have laid down for the regulation of their families. Be the *cause* of the evil what it may, the *result* is the same: *bad* children,

in place of *good* ones, and a home, which might have been a happy one, made thoroughly miserable.

This day, the Almighty is saying, in effect, to every parent now present in His Temple, but whose children are wandering they know not where, and doing they know not what, "*Where is thy flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?*" "Where are those dear children, entrusted to thy care, that thou might train them up for everlasting happiness in Heaven?"

With these solemn questions ringing in your ears, and reminding you of a responsibility too often forgotten, permit me to hold up before you two little pictures, sketched in roughest outline, but accurate enough to answer our present purpose. The first is that of an easy, over-indulgent, unfaithful parent. Again and again, the anxious pastor has inquired, "Why are not the children at Sunday-school?" "Why are they so often absent from church?" "Why do they take no part in the service?" The good-natured mother answers, that her children do not like Sunday-school, and that they feel no interest in church.

The truth is, religion, and its holy ways, were not made attractive to them, little by little, when those children were small. It was either entirely neglected, or attended to by fits and starts, and by a kind of *over-dosing*, which is sure to defeat its purpose. The only Sunday-school which would be attractive to such spoiled children now, would be one in which boyish sports were tolerated, and the only sort of church, must have some resemblance to a circus, or other similar entertainment!

In the ill-regulated family, the week comes abruptly to an end. There has been no gradual preparation, day by day, for the lesson at Sunday-school; but work and play have gone on, without cessation, to the latest possible moment. At a late hour of that sacred day—every moment of which belongs to God—the household rouse themselves from sleep, and before breakfast is well over, the bell for Sunday-school is heard, and then this child has lost his book, and that one finds his clothes out of order, and so the instructions of that morning are thrown away; and the teacher, who has made an effort to be at his post, goes home disheartened. Church-time comes. The parents are waiting for the children, some of whom are not to be found; the boys have gone to the river, or they are watching for the steamboats; indeed, the number of plausible excuses is legion.

The poor mother breathes a heavy sigh, and wonders why *her* children should be so thoughtless and headstrong, while those of her neighbor are so directly the reverse.

We shall venture to take a hasty glance into the neighbor's house, that the mystery may be solved. Here we find the subject of our second picture; that of a patient, pains-taking, conscientious parent. Good order and thrift are apparent on every hand. Religious instruction is made an every day affair. The command to God's ancient people, so far as its spirit is concerned, is carefully obeyed: 'Thou shalt teach these words diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou

walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. vi. 7. In this well-ordered family, every day is begun and ended with prayer. Each lisping tongue is taught to invoke God's blessing. The learning of Sunday-school lessons is no irksome task; because, being made a part of each day's business, it is accomplished almost without effort. Attendance at church is represented as a pleasure and a privilege, and it is esteemed a hardship and a punishment when any of the children are kept away. Each one that is able to read has been taught to find the day of the month, and the special services for the Sunday, or Festival, before they set out for the Lord's Holy Temple. And then, what happy Sunday nights at home! The children, great and small, gathered about a mother's knee, reciting hymns, and the catechism, and portions of Holy Scripture, and listening with rapt attention while she tells them the histories of the Saints of old, who have been faithful unto death.

With what loving eyes does the GOOD SHEPHERD look down upon such a scene, beholding "the beautiful flock," so quietly reposing within His fold, and preparing for the better and enduring blessings of His Heavenly Kingdom.

One of the most successful devices of the Devil is that by which he persuades parents and instructors of youth, that it is wrong to bias their minds in favor of any particular form of religion, and insisting that they ought to be allowed to grow up to become men and women, and then choose for themselves.

Coleridge illustrated the absurdity of this notion most

happily, in a conversation with a friend who was taking the position just referred to. Pointing to a plot of ground covered with a rank overgrowth of weeds, he said: "There is my botanical garden!" "How so?" replied his friend in astonishment; "it is full of weeds!" "O," returned Coleridge, "that is because it has not yet come to its age of discretion and choice. The weeds, you see, have taken the liberty to grow, and I thought it unfair in me to prejudice the soil towards roses and strawberries!"

Just as sensible is it to permit the moral nature of a child to be overrun, for years and years, with the weeds and brambles of sin, and then expect that in maturer age, the fruits of holiness can be reaped from this abused and impoverished soil.

Why did the Almighty promise special blessings to Abraham, and his family, even to remote generations? The reason has been recorded for our benefit. "I know him, that he will *command* his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Genesis xviii. 19. The truth is, that children should early form religious habits, if we expect them to be acquired at all. I spoke, in the outset, of the strict account which we must all render unto God, at the last, for the deeds done in the body. Let imagination travel onward, for a moment, to the close of this probationary state. The Throne of Judgment set: the Books opened; small and great standing before God. The two families, whose manner and habits we attempted to describe, are amongst that countless throng. The ETERNAL JUDGE,

fixing His all-searching eye upon the easy, over-indulgent, unfaithful parent, asks, in a tone of thunder, "*Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?*" Alas! what could such a parent answer, when thus reminded of sons and daughters, who *might* have had seats in Heaven, ruined by neglect, and now to be consigned to regions of unending woe!

We turn most gladly from a scene so awful, to one as different as can be well conceived.

The patient, pains-taking, conscientious parent, with the family circle complete, looks up to the JUDGE of quick and dead, as to a beloved friend, and exclaims with holy transport, "Behold me, gracious SAVIOUR, and the children whom THOU hast given me!"

My dear friends, which portion shall be yours? It is left for your own selves to determine.

## SERMON XXXV.

### THE BUSH THAT BURNED WITH FIRE.

“Behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.”—Exodus iii. 2.

A THOUGHTFUL shepherd is watching his flock in the wild, rugged region which borders along Mount Horeb. No one would suspect that he had ever been the adopted son of a proud monarch's daughter, and been carefully trained up amidst the luxuries of a court. And yet there is something in his intelligent countenance, and noble bearing, which mark him, even in the garb of a rustic shepherd, as being no common man. I need hardly tell you that it is MOSES. While watching over the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, he is revolving in his anxious mind the sad condition of the children of Israel, groaning under the lash of their merciless Egyptian task-masters. During forty long years he had been impatiently watching for some ray of hope which may direct him in forming a plan for their deliverance. (See Acts vii. 30.) But suddenly he is aroused from his painful reverie, by a spectacle wondrous to behold.

A bush,\* near by, was all aglow with fire, and yet,

\* “One of the commonest shrubs in that wilderness is the *dwarf palm*; not the date palm, but a different species, which



strange to say, the bush was not consumed. "And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." But as he assayed to approach nearer, that he might discover the reason of all this, a voice addressed him out of the midst of the bush, saying; "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Moreover, He said, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face: for he was afraid to look upon God." Exodus iii. 5, 6.

The person here spoken of as "The Angel of the Lord," is plainly no *created* being, for in the verses following, He claims to be *Divine*—"I AM THAT I AM;" "THE LORD GOD;" "JEHOVAH;" "this is My Name forever." (Verses 14, 15.) Now, since neither God the

does not, like that, rise to be a tree, but forms a low-spreading bush. And it is generally supposed that it was in one of these that Moses saw the flame. It is remarkable that in the eastern countries, palm branches have long been used on occasions of *triumph* or *rejoicing*, being reckoned an emblem of victory. Whether this custom arose from some tradition of that appearance to Moses, or whether it existed before, and was a reason for the selecting of a palm-bush for the display of the flame, we cannot determine.

"It is still more remarkable that the Greek name for a palm, PHŒNIX, was also a name given to an imaginary kind of bird, which was fabled to live a thousand years, and then to take *fire*, and burn to ashes, from which a new Phœnix arose. This fable may have arisen from an obscure tradition of the *palm-bush*, which 'burned with fire,' and yet was not destroyed." *Whately's* "GOOD AND EVIL ANGELS," p. 15.

Father, nor God the Holy Ghost is ever called an "Angel," the person who appeared to Moses must have been God the Son.

In further proof of this it should be mentioned, that the same title is applied to Him in other passages of Scripture. Malachi calls Him "The Angel of the Covenant." (iii. 1.) In the 23d chapter of Exodus, the Almighty promises to send an "Angel" before His people, to guide and protect them; and warns them not to provoke nor disobey Him, because of His exalted character. "For MY NAME is in Him," i. e., the NAME of GOD belongs to Him. 20, 22 verses.

Again, when speaking of their sufferings in the wilderness, Isaiah declares, "The ANGEL of His Presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them." Chap. lxiii. 9.

There seems, then, to be good authority for the opinion, that the ANGEL who appeared in the burning bush was none other than "The everlasting Son of the Father;" "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person; Who was made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they." Hebrew i. 3, 4.

What first attracted the attention of Moses, was the unaccountable fact that a "bush" when thus exposed to the action of fire, should remain unconsumed. As the Almighty does nothing in vain, it is evident that He must have had some wise purpose in view, in thus revealing Himself to His servant. It shall be our ob-

ject, to endeavor, in a devout and reverent spirit, to discover what this purpose was.

*Fire* is sometimes used in the Bible, to describe the *justice* and *holiness* of God. He is represented to the wicked as a "consuming fire," (Hebrews xii. 29); and their doom hereafter is said to be, to "dwell with the devouring fire," and to "lie down amidst everlasting burnings." Is. xxxiii. 14.

The same emblem is also employed, when mention is made of the "fiery trials," and afflictions, by which the righteous are purified from sin, and their faith and patience tested and strengthened. 1 Pet. iv. 12.

Keeping these points in view, we shall discover several ways in which the *burning bush* could convey important truths to Moses, and, at the same time, impart lessons of comfort and encouragement to us.

I. And first, *it was designed to represent the state of God's people in Egypt.*

They were a mere handful compared with the overwhelming number of their enemies; and jealousy and hatred had excited all classes against them. Not only was the yoke of the oppressors laid upon them, but the most cruel and effectual means were adopted for their destruction. And how were they possibly to escape? To rise up in rebellion, would only be riveting more closely the chains of their intolerable servitude, and most likely bring upon them instant death. They were no more able to ward off the violence of their foes, than a bush could remain unconsumed, while enveloped in devouring flames.

In this wonderful miracle, therefore, Moses was

taught what God *could* do for His people; or rather he was reminded what had already been done for them. Notwithstanding the cruel edict which had gone forth, commanding that every male child of the Israelites should be cut off, the Almighty frustrated the devices of the heathen, and even the daughter of Pharaoh was made the preserver of one, who afterwards became the leader and lawgiver of Israel.

With these facts fresh in his recollection, and with such a striking illustration of God's preserving power in the miracle of the bush, how could Moses for a moment believe that the Almighty would forget "His holy promise, and Abraham His servant?"

It was because the Angel of the Lord was in the bush, that the fire was unable to consume it. The Lord watched over His afflicted people, and by His power and presence, saved them from destruction. When the Egyptian king had been awed by the wonders wrought in their behalf, God went before them in a "fiery cloudy pillar," and never for a moment deserted them, until they showed by their ingratitude and rebellion, that they were undeserving of his care.

2. Again—the burning bush was emblematical of the condition of the Church, in every age of the world.

Like the Israelites in the land of bondage, the number of God's children is comparatively small, while the road to destruction is thronged with the deluded votaries of Sin and Satan. The Church is also an object of hatred to the world. The pursuits to which she calls her children are high and holy, and hence the ungodly deride and persecute them. It is true, Zion

has her seasons of rest and quietness (Acts ix. 31); but for the most part, her sons are required to be vigilant and valiant, in defence of their sacred trust.

Reasoning after the manner of men, who could have believed that a few unlettered fishermen would have been able, in so short a time, to combat successfully the passions and prejudices of the world, and to change even its kings and rulers, who had been their bitterest foes, into "nursing fathers" of the Church?

And yet, all this was so.

At first, the flames of persecution spread far and wide, and seemed to threaten complete destruction. Parents forgot the tender relations which bound them to their children, and children fancied that they were doing God service, when delivering up their parents to death.

Verily, the bush was burned with fire. "Stephen stoned, James slain with the sword, Peter crucified, John in Patmos, Ignatius among lions, Polycarp at the stake; these, in the sight of men and angels, were illustrious branches of the burning bush. Cranmer's right hand thrust, for its recreant signature, into the first fury of the flame that was to melt his heart; Latimer, cheering his bishop brother with the noble hope, that, of their blood and marrow, a candle should be lit in England, that never would go out: what noble blossoms these, fragrant amid the fires, of that old mountain rooted bush! Our own colonial Church, sitting, for years and generations, in solitude and sorrow, in a heathen land—how truly she has borne the Apostolic signs, in perils and privations. Are we not

called as Moses was, by every impulse of duty and of gratitude, to 'turn aside,' and 'see this great sight,' why the bush so burned was not consumed?"\*

What but the power of the Omnipotent ONE has preserved the Church from harm? How comforting those words of the Psalmist, "God is in the midst of her; therefore shall she not be removed; God shall help her, and that right early." xlv. 5.

Is any humble-minded Christian distressed and perplexed by the opposition of the world, or by the evil example of some who have once professed to be servants of the LORD JESUS? Does he fear that God has forsaken him, because his cup of sorrow is so full? To him is the kind assurance given, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Isaiah xliii. 2, 3.

3. But the resemblance between the case of the Israelities, and that of God's people in after times, holds good in another particular. We know from the history of the Jews, that although the LORD was their King, multitudes perished in their wickedness, and forfeited the promised inheritance of Canaan. This will be the case with all backsliders from the faith, and the impenitent sinner's certain doom.

Our Heavenly Father is gracious and merciful, but

\* Bishop Doane's works, vol. ii. pp. 598-600.

He is also just and holy. Of Zion, He says, "I will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." (Zech. ii. 5.)\* But to all who wilfully neglect to flee unto the Mount of Safety, "God is a *consuming fire*."

Two lessons are taught us in the text, which it will be well for us to remember.

1. When the curiosity of Moses had been awakened by the sight of the burning bush, the same voice which assured him that GOD was in the midst of the fire, also warned him not to approach too near His awful Presence. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." v. 3.

The fact that the ALMIGHTY was there, invested the bush, and the ground, with a sacredness which they did not possess before. God is present in *every* Temple which has been called by His Name, and solemnly set apart for His service. The moment we cross the threshold, let us remember, my friends, that we have left the world behind us, and that we are standing in the "Gate of Heaven," (Gen. xxviii. 17), and on "holy ground." The Sanctuary of God, the services to be celebrated therein and the Sacraments which His min-

\* "This image strongly expresses the protection of the Deity. It must have reminded the Jews of the pillar of fire, by which God directed and defended their ancestors. The promise that the Lord 'will be the glory in the midst of her,' is an allusion to the symbol of the Divine Presence in the Holy of Holies, (Rom. ix. 4.) Vitranga refers the literal completion of the prophecy to the time of the Maccabees; but thinks that the protection and glory of the future Jerusalem may also be predicted. (Rev. xx. 9.)' *Archbishop Newcome*.

isters dispense, are all sacred in their character ; and our conduct should be regulated accordingly.

2. The other lesson to be learned, is the necessity of securing "the good will of HIM who dwelt in the bush." Deut. xxxiii. 16.

In the book of Deuteronomy, where Moses is described as about to go up into the Mount, to end his days, the parting blessing is recorded, which he pronounced over the chosen tribes. Speaking of the descendants of Joseph, every comfort which a fruitful land could furnish is promised ; all of which, besides many spiritual blessings, would descend upon these tribes, from the loving kindness of the ALMIGHTY. The dying prophet recollects, with grateful satisfaction, the first appearance of the LORD in the burning bush. "For the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof ; and for the good will of HIM that dwelt in the bush ; let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren." Chap. xxxiii. 16.

The great and glorious BEING whose love was thus shown to His ancient people is ready to be our Friend. His life-giving SPIRIT animates His Body, the Church, and if we would secure the good will of Him Who appeared to Moses in the bush, it can only be by walking in the ways of His laws, and by doing the works of His commandments.

Then while the fiery trials of life are fitting us for our home in Heaven, we shall not be dismayed, as though some strange thing had happened unto us ; but as the children of Zion, unhurt by the flames of



persecution, and the enticements of an evil world, make good their defence within her walls, we shall behold anew the miracle which Moses saw at Horeb, and find comfort in the reflection, that although the bush is burned with fire, it can never be consumed.

## SERMON XXXVI.

### THE MIRACLE AT CANA OF GALILEE.

“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on him.”  
—ST. JOHN ii. 11.

CANA of Galilee, the scene of our LORD's first miracle, occupies “a gentle declivity, facing the setting sun: a sweet, peaceful village, which still arrests the traveller with its loveliness, and makes him feel that something still lingers there of *His* presence Who makes all things blessed and lovely.”\*

It is certainly noteworthy that the first public act of our Saviour's life was to honor the marriage rite by His appearance at the house where the happy company had assembled, and by the performance of a wonderful miracle, in order that the customary festivities might suffer no interruption. In discoursing upon this important occurrence, we cannot do better than to follow the narrative of the Evangelist step by step.

“And the third day (says St. John), there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee.”

The *time* of the marriage was the third day after that on which Philip and Nathaniel became followers of Christ. (St. John i. 43.) There would have been

\* Travels in Palestine by C. L. Higgins, of Turvey Abbey, quoted in the Plain Commentary on the Gospel, vol. ii. p. 639.

no difficulty in their walking from the banks of Jordan to Cana, in two days, thus allowing them ample time to be present at the wedding festivities on the third.

“And the Mother of JESUS was there.” (v. 1.) As the language seems to imply that she was present as a matter of course, and not by formal invitation, it may be fairly supposed that the marriage took place at the house of a relative or near friend. There is reason for believing that Joseph was now dead; the last mention of him being on the occasion of the visit of the Holy Child Jesus to the Temple, long years before.

Our Saviour had already begun to attract public attention, and it was very natural that some respect should be shown him. Hence, we are not surprised to read, that “both JESUS was called, and His Disciples, to the marriage.” v. 2.

Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathaniel, and St. John himself, who has furnished us with the graphic account of what there transpired, are supposed to be the Disciples thus referred to. The festivities at a Jewish wedding generally lasted seven days, and it appears that those giving the entertainment on this occasion, from poverty, or bad management, had not made sufficient preparation. Perhaps the attendance of the Disciples had not been looked for, or curiosity to see the Saviour may have drawn together a larger company than had at first been expected.

However this may be, before the festive days were ended, the means of entertainment began to fail; and,

in this emergency, "the Mother of JESUS saith unto Him, They have no wine." v. 3.

It has been ingeniously suggested, that when the blessed Virgin thus disclosed to her SON the painful position of the newly-wedded couple, she meant this: "I would wish you to withdraw, in order that the rest also may withdraw, before that the scarcity be made evident to all." This view has been taken by some, as rendering the reply of JESUS less harsh in appearance, and full of real tenderness and love.\*

We are rather inclined to the opinion that her words are to be regarded as the expression of a considerate, unselfish nature, which sympathized with the straitened household whose poverty was about to be exposed;—and she who had so long cherished and pondered in her heart those strange prophetic intimations concerning the future glory of her SON, may have readily believed that He possessed an inherent power which could be exercised in any real time of need. Indeed, it is evident from her manner of addressing Him, that she looked for some interference on His part, to prevent the mortifying exposure of poverty to which she referred.

The fact that the want of wine had been made known to her, strengthens the impression conveyed by other incidental references, that the blessed Virgin was in the house of a relative.

Our LORD had been obedient to the authority of Joseph and Mary in all that appertained to *earthly*

\* Bengel's Gnomen, vol. ii. p. 266.

matters, but when He engaged in His Heavenly Father's business, He could not be expected to yield to human interference or control. He accordingly replied to His Mother's suggestion in regard to the lack of means for the entertainment of the guests, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." v. 4.

Those who are disposed to exalt the blessed Virgin above her lawful place, have written most learnedly and laboriously, to prove that Jesus intended here neither rebuke nor blame. Such an effort is quite uncalled for; since no one at all familiar with the ancient tongues would gather from the expression here that our Saviour treated His Mother with harshness or disrespect. Indeed, when He was addressing her, for the last time on earth, while He hung in agony on the cross, His language, as He commended her to the care of the beloved Disciple, was: "*Woman*, behold thy son!" St. John xix. 26. "*Woman*" was a mode of address in those days, not only respectful, but perfectly consistent with tenderness and affection.

At the same time, there can be no doubt that in the question, "What have I to do with thee?" JESUS *did* intend to remind her that in His Divine character, as the Everlasting Son of the Father, His actions could not be controlled by any created being. In the words, "Mine hour is not yet come," He as plainly intimated, that when the fitting moment came, His miraculous power would not be withheld. Luther has most properly directed attention to the faith of Mary, who, from this apparent repulse, could yet draw forth an assurance that her petition, whatever may have been the error of

pressing it too hastily, or other fault that clung to it, should yet in due time be heard: so that, with entire confidence of this, she said to the servants, "*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it,*" evidently believing not merely that He would comply with her request, but in some degree guessing at, and even indicating the manner.\*

And if, my friends, our blessed LORD could thus make his own Mother wait, should *we* be discouraged because *our* petitions are not always answered speedily?

The holy Virgin could not understand *why* it was that her hitherto obedient SON addressed her in those mysterious words, but she felt that it must be for some wise purpose, and therefore, without perplexity or misgiving, she directed the servants (another evidence that she was quite at home in the house) to obey His commands.

St. John, who wrote his Gospel far off from Judea, where the customs of that country would be little known, goes on with the narrative, adding a word or so of explanation, when needed: "And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins a-piece." v. 6.

A wonderful miracle was now to be performed. Note what care was taken lest any captious or skeptical person should attempt to show that the least deception had been practised in the case! JESUS was about to provide for the want of wine. He does not, however, make use of the vessels commonly employed for holding it

\* See Trench's Notes on the Miracles, p. 89.

because, perchance, the unbelieving heart might reason that the sediment remaining in them had colored and flavored the water poured upon it, and thus imposed upon the unsuspecting guests. That no understanding or collusion with the servants might be charged upon HIM, our Saviour employed the six great water-pots of stone, standing near the door, in which the members of the household were accustomed to perform the legal washing,\* before their daily meals. Little did the servants dream, while waiting for the commands of the SON of Mary, what those commands would be!

When the "hour" for manifesting His Almighty power had come, He cast His eyes upon the six water-pots of stone, and said, with the calm dignity which marked His every word, "Fill the water-pots with water!" (ver. 7.) We may well imagine with what astonishment they carried forth the huge vessels into the open court, and filled them to the brim, with clear, cold water from the well.

Meanwhile, the Ruler of the feast (whose business it was to provide for the entertainment of the guests) may have endeavored, by cheerful and animated discourse, to while away the weary time, until some arrangement could be made to replenish the exhausted stores. But there need be no long delay. The water-pots of stone, full to the very brim, have already been brought back, and are standing in their accustomed place.

"Draw out now, and bear unto the Governor of the

\* See St. Matt. xv. 2; St. Mark vii. 2, 4, 8, and St. Luke xi. 39.

feast," (ver. 3), is the command of Jesus to the still more bewildered attendants. They instantly obeyed, and, pouring out pure, blood-red wine from the jars just filled with water, they carried it to the person designated. It was one part of the office of the Governor of the feast to taste the wine, before it was handed to the guests. The goblet had no sooner touched his lips, than he discovered the superior quality of the liquor, and called out to the bridegroom, who reclined near the middle of the table, in a joyous tone, all unconscious of the wonderful miracle which had just been wrought, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now." (ver. 10.)

Nothing is added to satisfy our curiosity in regard to the amazement of the bridegroom, and the assembled guests, when the servants had been questioned concerning the source of this abundant supply. All who were present at that feast had the evidence before them (if they would but open their eyes to the truth) that this was indeed the Christ.

Before passing on to the more obvious lessons taught by the miracle, the remark of the Governor of the feast, that, contrary to the usual custom, the best wine had, on this occasion, been kept for the close of the entertainment, suggests the reflection, that the ways of the world and of God are widely different. The world encourages us to snatch the shining cup of pleasure *now*, but when we have tasted it for a season, and appetite begins to pall, and we would fain reach forth our hand



for a fresher draught—alas! it has nothing to offer but the dregs of bitterness. But God calls us to make present sacrifices of comfort and self-indulgence, and afterwards turns our mourning into gladness, and satisfies the fainting soul with the delights of His Eternal Kingdom.

“The world presents us with fair language,” says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, “promising hopes, convenient fortunes, pompous honors, and these are the outside of the bowl; but when it is swallowed, these dissolve in an instant. Every sin smiles in the first address, and carries light in the face, and honey in the lips, but when we *‘have well drunk,’* then comes *‘that which is worse,’* a whip with six strings, fears and terrors of conscience, and shame and displeasure, and a caitiff disposition, and diffidence in the day of death. But when, after the manner of purifying of the Christians, we fill our water-pots with water, watering our couch with our tears, then Christ turns our water into wine—first penitents and then communicants—first waters of sorrow and then the wine of the chalice: for JESUS keeps the best wine to the last, not only because of the direct reservation of the highest joys till the nearer approaches of glory, but also because our relishes are higher after a long fruition than at the first essays, such being the nature of grace, that it increases in relish as it does in fruition, every part of grace being new duty and new reward.”\*

\* *Life of Christ*.—Mr. Keble, in the *Christian Year* (in the poem for the Second Sunday after Epiphany, when the Miracle at Cana is presented as the Gospel for the day) has beautifully expanded

In reviewing this portion of Sacred History, we remark :

I. That the presence of our Saviour at this marriage feast, is evidence enough that His followers may lawfully indulge in the innocent pleasures of life. I say the *innocent* pleasures; and this restriction should be carefully noted, because there are many, very many pleasures which are *not* innocent.

these thoughts in poetic numbers. We venture to give a small portion :

“ Too surely, every setting day,  
Some lost delight we mourn,  
The flowers all die along our way,  
Till we, too, die forlorn.

“ Such is the world’s gay garish feast,  
In her first charming bowl,  
Infusing all that fires the breast,  
And cheats th’ unstable soul.

“ And still, as loud the revel swells,  
The fever’d pulse beats higher,  
Till the sear’d taste from foulest wells  
Is fain to slake its fire.

“ Unlike the feast of heavenly love,  
Spread at the Saviour’s word,  
For souls that hear His call, and prove  
Meet for His bridal board.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Such is Thy banquet, dearest Lord;  
O give us grace, to cast  
Our lot with Thine, to trust Thy word,  
And keep our best till last.”

The design of religion is not to render us gloomy and morose, but cheerful and happy. The social intercourse of friends, and the joys which brighten and perpetuate domestic bliss, are by no means inconsistent with Christian duty. Still, *no* earthly pleasure should be regarded as the main object of our desires, but merely as wholesome seasons of relaxation, invigorating both body and mind, for a more diligent pursuit of things eternal. The presence of our blessed Lord at the marriage in Cana was, in fact, a solemn consecration, on His part, of that Divine institution, and of the sympathies which lead to it. "He stamps His image on human joys, human connections, human relationships. He pronounces that they are more than human—as it were, sacramental; the means whereby God's presence come to us; the types and shadows whereby higher and deeper relationships become possible to us. For it is through our human affections that the soul first learns to feel that its destiny is Divine. It is by an earthly relationship that God has typified to us and helped us to conceive the only true Espousal: the marriage of the Soul to her Eternal Lord."\*

II. Another point, most important to be noticed, is our SAVIOUR's conduct towards His Mother.

When taking upon herself to act as His *adviser*, in matters beyond her lawful control, He respectfully, but positively refuses all interference of this nature.

According to the declaration of the Angel, to the holy Virgin, "all generations" *have* called her "blessed."

\* F. W. Robertson's Sermons, Second Series, p. 290.

St. Luke i. 48. And well does she deserve this honor! She was an humble, trusting, faithful, obedient woman; having her faults and failings, like other mortals, in deed; but exalted above others, as the *woman whose seed should bruise the serpent's head*. Gen. iii. 15. She was "blessed" as the Mother who bore the holy Child Jesus; who watched over HIS early childhood; and with whom, His life, for thirty years, was passed.

There is something significant in the fact that no festivals have been appointed by the Church in honor of the blessed Virgin, but such as may also be festivals in honor of *her* LORD and *ours*: the *Purification*, commemorating His presentation in the Temple, and the *Annunciation*, commemorating His incarnation.

Beyond this pious and proper veneration of her, we cannot safely go. To pray to her, as one able to hear and keep us, or to implore her intercessions with our Divine Saviour, would be equally wrong and dangerous. There is only *one* MEDIATOR between God and man—even our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Like all others, who are conceived and born in sin, the blessed Mary needed the benefits of His atonement, and therefore she exclaims in the jubilant strains of the "Magnificat," "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in GOD my SAVIOUR!" St. Luke i. 46-7.

If JESUS rebuked her for *counselling* Him, even in the season of His humiliation upon earth, how absurd to suppose that she possesses more influence with HIM, now that He has returned to the throne of His glory, in Heaven!

III. The text speaks of the effects of this miracle as

twofold: *the manifestation of the Saviour's glory, and the establishment of the Disciples' faith.*

The Messiah promised in the Old Testament was to convince the world of His Exalted Character by "many infallible proofs," and "this beginning of miracles," at the marriage in Cana, was a most signal display of His power and goodness. He who, by the mere effort of His will, was able to change the pure, crystal water into the sparkling wine, could form the world out of nothing, and call forth the dead from their graves. He who thought it not beneath His notice to promote the happiness of His creatures, even by furnishing something not absolutely essential for their wants, but which long-established custom had associated with seasons of festivity, will never fail to give us all needful things, if we are careful to seek *first* the Kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof. St. Matt. vi. 33.

Although the Apostles had readily obeyed the Saviour's call, and had forsaken their worldly business, and kindred and friends, to become His followers, they still required some marvellous display of power, to establish and confirm their faith. The miracle which we have just noticed *had* this effect. From that moment, we are told, "His Disciples *believed* on Him."

There will be another and a far greater manifestation of the Saviour's glory, at a Marriage Feast, hereafter. His blessed Mother, and His faithful disciples, of every nation and tongue, will be welcomed then as honored guests.

Shall we not all labor and strive, my friends, to be found worthy of such an exalted privilege?

## SERMON XXXVII.

### THE RIGHTEOUS FLOURISHING LIKE THE PALM-TREE.

“The righteous shall flourish like the Palm-tree.”—PSALM xcii. 12.

FIGURATIVE language presents a kind of *picture* to the mind, which, at the same time, delights and instructs. The Bible is full of such expressions, and some of the most important doctrines are illustrated in this way.

Good and bad characters are often compared, by the sacred writers, to fruitful and unfruitful trees. Thus, David says, when speaking of the godly man, “He shall be like a tree planted by the water-side, that will bring forth his fruit in due season: his leaf also shall not wither: and look, whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper.” Psalm i. 3 and 4.

Isaiah calls those who mourn over their sins, and turn to the only true source of comfort, “Trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.” lxi. 3.

St. John the Baptist, while contrasting God’s dealings with those who obeyed, and such as despised His law, declares, “Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” St. Matt. iii. 10.

In the text, this figurative expression is contracted, in some degree, by comparing the true servants of God

to a particular tree: "The righteous shall flourish like the Palm-tree." We must, of course, consider this comparison as chiefly applicable to our adorable REDEEMER, the King of Righteousness, and the Tree of Life. "Eminent and upright (as Bishop Horne beautifully remarks); ever verdant and fragrant; under the greatest pressure and weight of sufferings, still ascending towards Heaven; affording both fruit and protection; incorruptible and immortal."

It must also have some relation and likeness to the character of every faithful servant of God. We shall, therefore, find it interesting and profitable to inquire, in what respects the righteous may be said to resemble the Palm-tree.

I. This comparison holds good, first, *in their usefulness*. "The extensive importance of this tree (says an Eastern traveler) is one of the most curious subjects to which a person can direct his attention. A considerable part of the inhabitants of Egypt, Arabia, and Persia, subsist almost entirely upon its fruit. They boast of its medicinal virtues. Their camels feed upon the date stone. From the leaves, they make a variety of articles for domestic use. From the fibres of the boughs, thread, ropes, and rigging are manufactured; from the sap is prepared a spirituous liquor; and the body of the tree furnishes fuel."

However remiss *individual* Christians may be, in the discharge of their duty, the natural tendency of religion is to make them "fruitful in every good work." Coloss. i. 10.

In the natural world, a tree which is growing larger

and stronger, year by year; and bears fruit in its season; and casts its beneficent shade abroad, is pronounced to be in a healthy condition; while one which is becoming shriveled, and weak, is known to be in a decaying, dying state. So, too, with all trees which are planted in the Lord's Vineyard.

I would not be understood, my friends, as hazarding the sweeping assertion, that none but church-members are patterns of usefulness in the world, or accomplish any good. Far from it. This much, however, must be granted. No one living within the bounds of Christendom can fail to be influenced, more or less, by the principles which there prevail. Even those who pass for *worldlings*, have learned many things from the followers of JESUS, almost imperceptibly to themselves; and are really adopting their rules of life, and imitating their purer and better ways. A nation without righteousness, would be one in which greedy selfishness would swallow up all considerations of mercy and compassion. Go and stand by those ancient cities, once buried beneath the fiery streams, which burst from the yawning crater of Vesuvius! You will behold the crumbling remains of palaces, and triumphal arches, and forums, and fountains, and baths, and amphitheatres. Every convenience and luxury which ingenuity could invent, for the comfort or caprice of the rich and the mighty. But where are the homes for orphans? Where, the hospitals for the sick? Where, the asylums for the lunatic and the blind? These, my friends, are the monuments of righteousness. These are founded by the Gospel of Christ. "The wisdom that is from



above, is full of mercy and good fruits." St. James iii. 17. Who are the patient and pains-taking teachers? Who are the first and foremost in carrying light and cultivation among savage tribes? Who are the peace-makers? Who are most ready to discharge their duties as citizens, and neighbors, and friends? Whose promises are the most solemnly and strictly kept? Whose principles are the source of the greatest benefit to mankind? The righteous—the children of God.

II. Again. The righteous may be compared to the Palm-tree, *in their resistance to external calamities.*

It is a remarkable fact, that the more you attempt to hinder the growth of this tree, by pressing it down with weights, by heaping stones and rubbish upon its roots, and by injuries to the bark, the stronger powers of resistance does it manifest: shooting up its straight and upright trunk, a hundred feet, and more. And even when the old stock has withered and decayed with age, and fallen prostrate to the ground, fresh sprouts spring vigorously from the roots; thus giving rise (as some have thought) to the fable of the Phoenix dying, and another rising from its ashes. "The Palm grows slowly, but steadily, from century to century, uninfluenced by those alternations of the seasons which affect other trees. It does not rejoice overmuch in winter's copious rain, nor does it droop under the drought and burning sun of summer. Neither heavy weights which men place upon its head, nor the importunate urgency of the wind, can sway it aside from perfect uprightness. There it stands, looking calmly down upon the world below, and patiently yielding its

large clusters of golden fruit from generation to generation."\*

*When*, my friends, does the spiritual life of the righteous flourish best? Not when all hindrances and temptations are removed. Not when the skies are always bright, and the breezes soft and refreshing. Not when prosperity gathers about the Christian every thing which heart can wish for.

The soul is much more likely to rise upward, or assert its higher claims, when misfortunes, and ill-usage, and wrongs, are pressing heavily upon it. As the bodily strength is best developed and preserved by those inured to toil, and who boldly face the tempest and the cold, so is our inner life invigorated and prolonged by the roughnesses and afflictions which beset the good man's way.

Job's faith was made so firm, by the fiery trials through which he passed, that he saw God's wise dealings more plainly than before, and could cheerfully exclaim: "Though HE slay me, yet will I trust in HIM." xiii. 15.

The ability to bear up under afflictions, will be in proportion to their number and magnitude. I speak, now, of those who put their trust in the Lord. The *degree* of strength which He imparts will be greater or less, according to the nature of our trials. We have no idea how much we *can* endure, until the load is placed upon us. We know not how important it is that we should be tried, until we have begun to reap the benefits, in after time.

\* The Land and the Book, vol. i. 65-6.

You cannot persuade the *proud* man that *this* is his besetting sin, unless he is obliged to stoop. The impatient only discovers his fretfulness when asked to wait. And so with *every* trial which God in mercy sends. "Sufferings hold in check, for a time, our spiritual faults, and prepare our hearts to receive and to retain deeper and sharper impressions of the likeness of our Lord." Difficulties, of whatever sort, in their moral influence on the mind, may be compared to winds which sweep the ocean; purifying what, if left to its own calm and sluggish state, would become a mere mass of corruption, and a breeding place of pestilence. Though the power of the tempest may sometimes lash the surges into a rage, fraught with destruction to the mariner, this evil appears trifling, when compared with the good thus accomplished. So, too, with man. His mind may sometimes be disabled by the shock, and be swallowed up by the billows of adversity; but again it rises from the threatening grave, and moves on, more buoyant than before.

III. The righteous may also be said to resemble the Palm-tree *in their duration*.

According to the report of naturalists, this tree is most productive from the thirtieth until the eightieth year, and continues to flourish for more than two centuries.

At first thought, it might seem almost absurd to say, that the children of God live longer than those who serve the world, the flesh, and the devil. But, my friends, the Bible certainly encourages this idea, in such passages as these: "Bloodthirsty and deceitful

men shall not live out half their days." Psalm lv. 24. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom. Length of days is in her right hand." Prov. iii. 16. "Because he hath set his love upon ME (says the Almighty, to the trusting soul), therefore will I deliver him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation." Psalm xci. 14-16.

Does God merely wish to tantalize with false hopes, when He charges children to obey their parents, that their days may be long upon the earth?

Habits of regularity, and moderation, and self-restraint, which the rules of the Gospel require, *do* greatly contribute to the health and happiness of such as observe them. And who does not know, that peace of conscience, the sense of sins forgiven, and of God's favorable regard, are more efficacious remedies for healing our infirmities than any which can possibly be devised?

As in the case of the Palm-tree, the death of the old stock is the signal for new and thrifty sprouts to grow up from its roots, so the bodily decay of the righteous is but the freeing of the soul from a house of bondage, and permitting her to rejoice in a higher and holier existence.

It is true both good and bad live on forever, because the soul is immortal. But the condition of the one is so dark and dismal that it is compared to *death, eternal death*. The righteous, on the other hand, are said to awake to "a resurrection unto *life*"; a life which will never end.

St. John, in describing their happiness in Heaven,

represents them as bearing Palm-branches in their hands, in token of victory over death ; as if he had also observed the beauty and propriety of the figure, employed by the royal psalmist, in the text. Rev. vii. 9-10. The righteous, as we have seen, may be said to resemble the Palm-tree *in their usefulness, in their resistance to external calamities, and in their duration.*

If we would have this happy portion to be ours, we must observe God's laws for our spiritual growth and improvement.

As the roots of a thrifty tree draw forth nourishment from the ground, while its leaves drink in sustenance from the air, so must the soul be cheered by the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and refreshed by the grace of God, bestowed in answer to prayer, in the study of His Word, and in the ordinances of His Church. "Such as are planted in the House of the Lord shall flourish in the Courts of the House of our God. They shall also bring forth more fruit in their age, and shall be fat and well-liking: that they may show how true the Lord my strength is, and that there is no unrighteousness in Him." Psalm xcii. 12-14.

Some one may insist, that the wicked, also, have *their* season of prosperity. True ; but how different their end ! "When the ungodly are green as the grass, and when all the workers of wickedness do flourish, then shall they be destroyed forever." Psalm xcii. 7.

And let Christians remember that a barren profession is nothing worth. Many outward tokens may now appear which pass for works of righteousness, but they will be scattered and disappear, when the season

of trial comes: "Even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Rev. vi. 13. Seek, therefore, my friends, to be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by JESUS CHRIST, unto the glory and praise of God." Philip. i. 12. Be holy. Be useful. Be steadfast. Your reward will begin in *this* life, and it will be eternal and unfading in the next.

## SERMON XXXVIII.

### MAN TAUGHT BY THE LOWER ORDERS OF CREATION.

“Ask now the beasts, that they shall teach thee ; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee.”—JOB xii. 7.

THE text may be regarded as an invitation to turn aside, for a while, from the well trodden path in which we are wont to go, while searching for “the knowledge of God,” and to study those lessons of wisdom suggested by wider rambles in the field of nature. In other words, our theme will be, *Man taught by the lower orders of creation.*

Such a subject seems strikingly in harmony with the opening Spring. “The Winter is past—the rain is over and gone ; the flowers appear in the earth ; the time of the singing of birds is come.” Song of Solomon ii. 11, 12.

I shall attempt no systematic arrangement, nor endeavor to exhaust a topic so fruitful and attractive. If any apology be needed for deviating at all from the ordinary course of sermons, I may add that the true dignity of the preacher’s office can never be infringed upon, while he follows, at humble distance, in the footsteps of Prophets, and of our blessed Lord. Where was the great duty of repentance more forcibly illustrated, than in Jeremiah’s beautiful apostrophe to the

birds of the air, which by wonderful instinct come back each year, at a set time, to the country they had left; while obdurate man, though boasting of his reasoning faculties, cannot be persuaded to turn from the ways of sin, to the service of a gracious Father? Jer. viii. 7. Even "the stork in the Heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord."

How has idleness ever been so keenly rebuked as in Solomon's advice: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise; which, having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." Prov. vi. 8.

Is it possible for language to paint more clearly the ingratitude of man, than Isaiah's moving words: "Hear, O heaven; and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider." i. 2, 3.

It is a striking fact, noticed by naturalists, that the soaring eagle, when moved by parental instinct, lowers his lordly wings to bear a burden for its young. The great Jehovah, in order to convey to us an idea of His marvellous loving kindness, thus speaks of His dealings with Israel, in days of old: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on



eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself." Ex. xix. 4.

Again the inspired Prophet declares, when rehearsing the merciful acts of the Most High, "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings," so did the Lord deal with his chosen. Deut. xxxii. 11, 12.

The Almighty sends the distrustful to the ravens, to learn the duty of reliance on Him. "Who provideth the raven his food?" is the question proposed in the Book of Job. xxxviii. 41. The Psalmist answers, God "giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry." cxlvii. 9. "Consider the ravens," says our Lord, "for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls?" St. Luke xii. 24.

What lesson of caution could be better expressed, than in that simple advice to the chosen Twelve, upon their first going forth to do battle with this evil world. "Be ye wise as serpents." St. Matt. x. 16.

No creature can at all compare with these, in the swiftness and skill with which they escape from danger. "So," said Christ to His disciples, "So you need caution and wisdom in the midst of a world that will seek your lives."

When was the tender affection of God, and the stubbornness of sinners more vividly portrayed, than in our Saviour's lament over ill-fated Jerusalem: "How often would I have gathered thy children together,

even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" St. Matt. xxiii. 37.

"Look how the hen invites her brood  
Beneath her wings to lie,  
Look how she calls them to their food,  
How eyes, in eager, dauntless mood,  
The wheeling hawk on high.

"So would thy Lord His pinions spread  
Around thee, night and day,  
So lead thee, where is Heavenly Bread,  
So, by the Cross whereon He bled,  
The spoiler scare away."

—*Keble's Lyra Innocentium.*

How could meekness and patience be made more manifest, than in the evangelical Prophet's vision of the sufferings of our Lord: He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." Isaiah liii. 3-7.

What figure could convey such a just and consoling idea of the particular Providence of God, as that in which the sparrows, the humblest and most insignificant of birds, are referred to as the objects of His care: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows." St. Matt. x. 29, 30.

What a pleasing picture of the quietness and security of the Church of God, is conveyed by the Psalmist's words: "The sparrow hath found her a house, and the swallow a nest, where she may lay her young; even Thy altar, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God." Ps. lxxxiv. 3.\* Well may the Christian, disturbed by the troubles of life, desire to find admission to the "many mansions" of his Father's house above. "There shall the heart and flesh, the whole redeemed soul and body, exult eternally in the presence of the living God. There, even now, our wandering affections and restless fleeting thoughts can find their rest and home, even as in Shiloh or in Sion the sparrows dwelt within the courts of the Sanctuary, and the swallow made her nest and reared her young in the pillars which stood around the altar of burnt-offerings." Plain Commentary on Psalms, vol ii. p. 87.

The Dove has always been considered a fitting emblem of mildness, innocence, and simplicity. It is somewhat remarkable how frequently this gentle creature is mentioned in the Bible, either in a literal or figurative sense. A dove was sent forth from the ark, to explore the wide waste of waters, and brought back to Noah an olive-leaf, as a token that deliverance was near. Gen. viii. 8-12.

Doves were among the offerings required to be made in the Temple. Levit. xii. 8; Num. vi. 10.

The Psalmist prays for the preservation of the Church, under the appropriate image of a simple, soli-

\* See "The Land and the Book," vol. i. p. 53, and Hackett's Illustrations of Scripture, p. 95.

tary, meek, and mournful dove : “ O, deliver not the soul of Thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the enemies !” Ps. lxxiv. 20.

When Solomon, in his inspired Song, would teach that the Church of God can never be divided—that it must always be united in faith and forms, his touching language is, “ My dove, My undefiled is but one.” Solomon’s Song, vi. 9.

Isaiah alludes to the rapid growth of Zion, when the days of her mourning are ended, in the significant and suggestive question : “ Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows ?” lx. 8.

At the baptism of Jesus, He saw the heaven opened, and “ the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him.” St. Matt. i. 10.

When He commissioned the Apostles for their holy work, His prudent counsel was, “ Be ye harmless as doves.” St. Matt. x. 16.

At each glad return of Witsun-tide, when the gift of the blessed Comforter is celebrated by the universal Church, the old, inspiring hymn is sung :

“ Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly dove,  
With all Thy quickening powers ;  
Kindle a flame of sacred love  
In these cold hearts of ours.”\*

It may be thought far-fetched, perhaps, to trace any resemblance, however faint, between the softening, soothing influences of the Spirit of grace, and the effect which the plaintive notes of the dove are known

\* See “ The Dove on the Cross,” in Keble’s Christian Year.

to produce. But facts of this sort are well established. Audubon mentions, in his great work on Ornithology, that an abandoned pirate was so wrought upon by the soft, melancholy cry of the doves, which he accidentally heard, while once engaged on shore, as to awaken in his breast feelings which had long slumbered; melting his heart to repentance, and leading him to abandon his evil companions, and return to a family deploring his absence and the wickedness in which he had so freely indulged.

Few persons, old or young, can read Mrs. Sherwood's little story of "The Raven and the Dove," with unmoistened eyes, so beautifully does it portray the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, as contrasted with the fearful effects of sin.

The dog was held in great contempt among the Jews, but was worshipped by the Egyptians. See Deut. xxiii. 18; Eccles. xiii. 18; 1 Sam. xxiv. 14; 2 Sam. ix. 8; Rev. xxii. 15.

Many ages and nations, however, have united in regarding this animal as the type of fidelity. In speaking of this subject, Burns characteristically remarks: "Man is the god of the dog. He knows no other; he can understand no other; and see how he worships him! With what reverence he crouches at his feet! With what love he fawns upon him! With what dependence he looks up to him; and with what cheerful alacrity he obeys him! His whole soul is wrapped up in his god; and the power and faculties of his nature are devoted to his service; and these powers

and faculties are ennobled by the intercourse.”\* Would that Christians worshipped and obeyed their God with equal care!

Some most touching instances have been recorded of the affection of birds—especially of the swan (Leviticus ii. 18; Deut. xiv. 16), where such feelings would not be looked for. It is not my purpose to quote any instances of the sort. I merely refer to the fact, that the curious may look farther into them. See Jesse’s *Gleanings in Natural History*. A beautiful trait in the habits of this bird is noticed in the answer of a mother to the question of her son—expressed in simple verse:

“What is that, Mother?” “The swan, my love!  
He is floating down from his native grove—  
No loved one now, no nestling nigh,  
He is floating down by himself to die;  
Death darkens his eye, and unplumes his wings,  
Yet his sweetest song is the last he sings.  
Live so, my love, that when death shall come,  
Swan-like and sweet, it may waft thee home.”

Only time is left me to refer to a little legend, which is none the less pleasing because it is old. It is said that while our blessed Saviour hung upon the cross, a robin, hovering near, carried off a thorn from the Sufferer’s crown, and dyed his bosom with the blood. From that time, robins have been regarded as the friends of man. The idea has been thus sweetly breathed in poetic numbers:

\* “The London Quarterly Review,” for Jan. 7, 1861 [p. 92], has a charming article on “The dogs of History and Romance.”

"Sweet Robin, I have heard them say  
That thou wert there upon the day,  
The Christ was crowned in cruel scorn,  
And bore away one bleeding thorn ;  
That so, the blush upon thy breast,  
In shameful sorrow was impressed ;  
And thence, thy genial sympathy  
With our redeemed humanity.

"Sweet Robin, would that I might be  
Bathed in my Saviour's blood, like thee,  
Bear in my breast, whate'er the loss,  
The bleeding blazon of the cross ;  
Live, ever with thy loving mind,  
In fellowship with human kind ;  
And take my pattern still from thee,  
In gentleness and constancy."

I have thus, in few words, suggested a motive for repentance ; exposed the sins of idleness and ingratitude ; portrayed the kindness and compassion of God ; inculcated the duty of reliance upon Him ; shown the need of caution in mixing with the world ; contrasted the forbearance of the Almighty with the stubbornness of the wicked ; proved the doctrine of a special Providence ; invited you to share in the quietness and security of the Church ; pointed out the beauty of an innocent and blameless life ; spoken of the worth of fidelity ; and of true and earnest affection ; and all, as a simple comment on a text of Scripture which some of you may never have observed before, and even those who have seen it, may never have taken time to meditate upon.

The lower orders of creation have been held up as your patterns. Let it not be in vain, that the Creator of all things may be heard to say: "Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee!"



## SERMON XXXIX.

### THE DUTY AND PRIVILEGE OF BUILDING AND ADORNING CHURCHES.

“Remember me, O my God; concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the House of my God, and for the offices thereof.”—NEHEMIAH xiii. 14.

SUCH was the prayer of Nehemiah, after he had corrected the abuses which had crept into God's House, and restored to the Priests their lawful privileges and authority.

It appears that the father of Nehemiah did not return with the other Jews to their own land, after the seventy years' captivity, but remained with his family in Persia. In the course of time Nehemiah became cup-bearer to King Artaxerxes, which was a most honorable and important station.

While discharging the duties of his office, a report came from Judea, that the remnant of the Israelites were in a sad and depressed condition; and that, as the walls of Jerusalem had been thrown down, they were left defenceless, and exposed to the most imminent peril. These mournful tidings affected Nehemiah deeply, and he resolved to go at once to the assistance of his brethren.

Before asking leave of Artaxerxes, he prayed to HIM in whose hands are the hearts of Kings, that HE

would grant him favor in the sight of his royal master; which request was answered. Nehemiah accordingly hastened to Jerusalem, and for twelve years was actively and successfully engaged in providing for the safety and welfare of the afflicted Jews. At the end of this period, he went back to Persia and resumed his station at the Court. He had, however, hardly left Jerusalem before abuses of various kinds began to make their appearance.

Among others, the tithes which had been set apart for the support of the priesthood, and the due celebration of public worship, were most wickedly withheld, and squandered for other purposes; and, in consequence, the ministers of God's House were forced to neglect their sacred duties, and engage in worldly pursuits, to gain the means of livelihood. When Nehemiah heard of this he came back to Jerusalem, and by unwearied diligence and zeal, succeeded in reforming these abuses.

It was at the close of this great work that he offered up the petition contained in the text, "Remember me, O my GOD, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the House of my God, and for the offices thereof."

That Nehemiah did not make this request under the influence of self-righteous views of his own merits, or because he thought the Almighty was a debtor to him, is plain from another petition, found in the same chapter, "Remember me, O my GOD, concerning this also, and spare me, according to the greatness of thy mercy," (ver. 22.)

The good works which he had been enabled to perform, were designed to promote God's glory. He was not a selfish and ambitious man, who sought, in this way, to advance his private interests. His motives were pure. He loved God, and proved the strength of his attachment by doing good to men; and this, not only by providing for their temporal wants, but by restoring the daily worship, and securing the means of support to those who ministered in the "House of Prayer."

"It is evident that Nehemiah expected that the Lord would remember his good deeds, and vouchsafe them a gracious recompense, notwithstanding defects in them, and sin in him; after the same manner as the Apostle Paul assures the Hebrews, that the Lord would not forget their work and labor of love."\*

Nehemiah looked back with pleasure upon the hardships he had undergone, and the sacrifices he had made for the chosen people of God. The reflection that his exertions had secured for them the prayers, and instructions, and examples of the appointed servants of the altar, afforded him more satisfaction than all the honors and enjoyments to be found in the court of an earthly prince. His deeds were such as the Almighty approves, and it is a pleasing thought, my brethren, that we may imitate this pious Jew, by liberality and zeal "for the House of our God, and for the offices thereof."

Ever since the establishment of His kingdom upon

\* Scott's Commentary, in loco.

earth, God's people have contributed of the wealth with which he has entrusted them, in building temples to the honor of His name.

It is delightful to read with what a cheerful spirit the Israelities presented their gifts for the erection of the Tabernacle. "They brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman. \* \* Bracelets, and ear-rings, and jewels of gold," and materials for "the holy garments" of the Priests, and "spice and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense" (Exodus xxxv.); in short every thing which they possessed which could help along the good work.

When David found himself seated on the throne of Israel, he felt unwilling to remain in a "house of cedar," while "the ark of God dwelt within curtains" (2 Sam. vii. 2), and proposed to build a temple more worthy of the Divine presence. The Almighty, however, commanded him to leave this work for Solomon, who accordingly carried out his wishes; and having finished "the House of the Lord," he "brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; the silver and the gold, and the vessels" (1 Kings vii. 51), and then solemnly set it apart to the service of Jehovah.

The fires of persecution, which tried the faith of the early Christians, had not gone out before places for public worship were established. Several of the early Fathers understand the passage in 1 Corinthians xi. 22, "Have ye not houses to eat in, that ye despise the Church of God," as referring, not to the Assembly, but to the place, appointed for the offering up of prayer, the administration of the Sacraments, and the preach-

ing of the Gospel; thus tracing back the existence of church edifices to the first century.

During the second and third centuries, many references of the same kind are found; and it is mentioned by Eusebius (Book viii. chap. 1) that the number of believers had so increased "that their ancient churches were not large enough to hold them, and therefore they built more spacious ones in every city." At first they were, of course, cheap and plain, because Christians were unable to do better, but when their means increased they showed their gratitude to God by raising costly temples. "The glory of Lebanon, and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon" were given unto the Christian Church. All nations "have brought gold and incense, and showed forth the praise of the Lord. \* \* They have fallen down and made supplication." Isaiah xxxv. 2; lv. 13, etc.

The world attributes such an outlay to "spiritual pride," and calls it "extravagance!" It is true, the differences of earthly glory can be nothing to the "High and Holy One," who dwells "in the light which no man can approach unto" (1 Timothy vi. 16), and who can only be worshipped acceptably when he is worshipped "in spirit and in truth;" but the fact is undoubted that the desire that God may be served in the most becoming way, is a strong proof that our hearts are right before Him.

Nothing but contracted parsimony ventures to ask, "To what purpose is this waste?" While men are building fine houses for themselves, and gathering about them all the comforts of life, is it right that a

humble place should be set up and called God's House? "The silver and the gold" are His—He "giveth men power to get wealth." Are they justified, then, in employing the largest share for their own uses, and casting into the Lord's treasury the small surplus, which it costs them no sacrifice to contribute?

But besides the propriety of the thing, there are other reasons why "the temple of the Lord" should be built and adorned with taste and care, and the services performed therein "decently and in order." We are all, more or less, influenced by what some choose to call unimportant matters. To cite an example of everyday occurrence, our opinion of a man's character is often formed from merely noticing his dress or manners. To impress the mind deeply, with awe and reverence for the Almighty, the place where we meet to worship him should convey some idea of his greatness and glory. Even bigotry itself, which had power to lead a mighty intellect away from "the faith once delivered" to the church of the Redeemer, could not prevent his acknowledging this truth in most touching words:

"Oh may my due feet never fail  
To walk the studious cloister's pale,  
And love the high embowed roof,  
With antique pillars, massy proof,  
And storied windows richly dight,  
Casting a dim religious light;  
There let the pealing organ blow  
To the full voiced choir below,  
In service high and anthem clear,  
As may with sweetness thro' mine ear,

Dissolve me into ecstasies,  
And bring all heaven before mine eyes."\*

Such being the influence of externals upon the mind, it is hardly necessary to remark, that where the ability exists to beautify the sanctuary of God, it should be considered a duty and privilege to do it.

People thus show that they feel in some degree that debt of gratitude which is due to God. The man in active life—whether his means be great or small—when summing up the profits of the year, should say, "This sum I dedicate to God!"—Those in feeble health, or in the decline of life, should remember in their wills "the House of God," and bring a blessing on their wealth, by "lending to the Lord."

What a comfort on our dying beds, to be able, with humbleness of heart, to say, as Nehemiah did, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done, for the House of my God, and for the offices thereof."

May He dispose us thus to act! May He graciously accept the offerings we may bring! May He of his goodness grant that "our outward show may not outstrip our inward progress; that whatever gift, rare or beautiful, we bring into His temple, may be but a figure of inward beauty and unseen sanctity ornamenting our hearts."

It was the impassioned declaration of the pious David, "I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep, nor mine eye-lids to slumber, neither the temples of my head to

\* Milton's "Il Penseroso."

take any rest, until I find out a place for the temple of the Lord; an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." Psalms cxxxii. 4, 5.

Let it be our endeavor, brethren, to imitate his holy zeal! It is the exalted privilege of Christians to be "co-workers" with their God; and they should not be unmindful of it. We can all do something towards building up His Kingdom, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that God "will not forget our work and labor of love." The minister has his peculiar sphere of duty—the people have theirs. You can be regular at church—you can bear your part in the services—you can invite others to come with you—you can attend Church twice on Sunday—you can find scholars for the Sunday-school, and help to teach them—you can instruct your children at home, in the catechism, and "train them up in the way they should go"—you can be liberal in your contributions—you can pray for your minister, and for the church at large. Above all, if you would ever reach Heaven, you can, and ought, and must cultivate the humility, and patience, and charity, of quiet and consistent followers of the Lord Jesus.

If Pastor and People thus labor together, in dependence on God's grace, "no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper." Zion will soon "lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes." The consciousness that you are trying to do your duty, will cheer you in your work and when your services in earthly temples are ended you may be sure of an entrance into that "building of God," that "House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."



## SERMON XL.

### THE CURSE OF DRUNKENNESS.

“Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”—1 Cor. vi. 10.

ONCE, as I sat by the bedside of a wretched man, whom long indulgence in strong drink had doomed to death, and who was not at all prepared to go, I endeavored to arrest his attention, and make him realize his peril, by repeating this fearful text. To my utter astonishment, he triumphantly answered: “How can that be true, when, in another place, the Almighty commands me to be made drunken?” “Where?” I asked. He gravely repeated these words from the book of the Prophet Jeremiah: “Make ye him drunken; for he magnified himself against the Lord: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision.” xlviii. 26.

“Look to Jesus, to pardon your grievous sin, my poor friend,” said I, “and do not add to your offences by thus perverting God’s holy Word.”

It is an awful thing to consult the Bible in order to find a salve for an accusing conscience, and an abandoned life!

From the days of Noah (Genesis ix. 21) until the present time, the love of strong drink has been a most insidious and fatal vice. It has robbed wise men of

their reason, and the rich of their wealth, and degraded them to the level of the brutes. Ahasuerus, with his "merry heart," behaved like one devoid of sense, and Alexander the Great, under the influence of intoxicating drink, murdered his friend.

Lord Chief Justice Hale once remarked: "The places of judication which I have long held in this kingdom, have given me an opportunity to notice the original cause of most of the enormities that have been committed for the space of nearly twenty years; and, by due observation, I have found that if the murders and manslaughters, the burglaries and robberies, the riots and tumults, the adulteries, and other great enormities that have happened in that time, were divided into five parts, four of them have been the issue and products of excessive drinking, or of tavern and ale-house meetings."\*

The vivid picture which Solomon has drawn of the sin and shame of drunkenness is terrible to look upon: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine: they that go to seek mixed wine."

Such a graphic delineation of the misery and ruin

\* "The English who, of all the Northern nations, had been till now the moderate drinkers, and most commended for their sobriety, learned in these Netherland wars first to drown themselves with immoderate drinking, and by drinking others' healths to impair their own. And ever since the vice of drunkenness hath so diffused itself over the whole nation, that in our days first it was fain to be restrained by severe laws."—*Camden's Elizabeth*, p. 263.

produced by Intemperance, if hung up at the doors of our drinking-houses and bar-rooms, might turn aside the steps of many from the downward road to the pit.

An old philosopher being asked by what means one might best be put on his guard against this seductive vice, replied: "By bearing constantly in view the loathsome, indecent behavior of such as are intoxicated." You remember that it was upon this principle that the Lacedæmonians adopted the custom of exposing their drunken slaves to their children, who, by that means, conceived an aversion to an indulgence which rendered its victims so irrational and disgusting. It is fearful to reflect that in this enlightened age, and within the borders of our own country, thirty thousand immortal beings are every year consigned to the drunkard's grave!

The intemperate man will sometimes say, with no little impatience: "If I choose to drown my troubles in the intoxicating cup, whose concern is it but my own? Who do I injure but myself? And why should such indulgence be considered so grievous a sin?"

I shall attempt to answer these questions.

1. And first, no one can deny that the use of intoxicating drinks is *a great waste of property*.

The heavy taxes levied for the support of poor-houses and jails, and the demands for criminal justice, furnish abundant evidence to prove it. Our people probably expend fifty millions of dollars a year for strong drink, and it is estimated that five hundred

thousand men are rendered little better than drones and idlers, in consequence of their intemperate habits.

2. Again, the use of intoxicating liquors *impairs the strength and diminishes the power of endurance.*

The wrestlers, and runners, and boxers of olden time, drank pure wine very moderately, and stronger beverages not at all; while the hardy Roman soldier, who endured the fatigues of forced marches, under a weight of armor which would crush the degenerate heroes of later days, was allowed nothing better than vinegar and water to sustain his strength. A distinguished English surgeon remarks: "I have worn out two armies in India, and I expect to wear out two more ere I die of old age, and I know that intoxicating drinks are decidedly injurious to soldiers."

Shipmasters and seamen have given similar testimony.

3. Intemperance is also to be avoided, because *it is a serious injury to the health.*

Thousands of physicians have decided that ardent spirits contain no wholesome nourishment for the body, and that they act as a slow poison. The flushed cheek, the nervous, unsteady hand, and the wandering, watery eye, are any thing but evidences of health. Statistics show that the amount of mortality among persons of intemperate habits from twenty to thirty years of age, is five times greater than that of the community generally, and from thirty to forty years of age, it is four times greater.

4. A fourth reason for taking decided ground on the subject is, that ardent spirits *enfeeble the powers of*

*mind, and render the judgment incompetent to fulfil its office.*

Years ago, a youth of the highest promise, and bearing an honored name, was esteemed such a prodigy of learning by the College where he graduated, that he received on the same day, his first and second degrees; a most unusual occurrence even in this land of rapid advancement. United in marriage with one of the loveliest of her sex, and appointed Attorney General before many of his own age had mastered their legal studies, nothing seemed wanting to complete his worldly bliss. In the midst of this honorable and successful career he suddenly and mysteriously resigned his position. The truth is, he was a secret drinker, and his sense of honor was too high to permit him to occupy an important station, which he felt that his unfortunate habits rendered him incompetent to fill.

His heart-broken wife returned to her father's house, and died. Her husband shed bitter tears over her grave, and looked with tender affection upon the sweet boy she had left behind; but strong drink was his master, and would not yield up its victim. Now and then, hopes were entertained that he might escape, and once, during this period of temporary relief, he was the successful advocate of a most important case before the Supreme Court of the United States, and even Chief Justice Marshall gazed with wonder on the barrister who gave utterance to such uninterrupted bursts of argument and eloquence. In after years, a member of Congress, seeing his splendid portrait

hanging in one of the public galleries at Washington, inquired whose it was, and was told by the person in attendance that it was the likeness of one of the most brilliant geniuses which the country had produced. Alas! that rum should extinguish such a light!

5. Again. Dram drinking *deadens the sensibilities and renders people reckless and foolhardy*. Jefferson's experience led him to say that no intemperate man ought to be appointed to any office of trust. Benedict Arnold, the traitor, was a rumseller and a drunkard. Three of the most memorable defeats of the American army during the Revolution, were sustained by leaders who died confirmed sots. Had a sober crew been on board the *Chesapeake*, the lamented Lawrence would never have been obliged to issue the noble, but ineffectual command, "Don't give up the ship!" Whole days might be spent in detailing accounts of accidents, by land and sea, occasioned by intemperance. Drunken drivers, and commanders, and agents, and conductors, will have a heavy weight of accountability resting on their souls.

6. Moreover, we must insist that the common verdict against the habitual use of strong drink is just, *because of the domestic unhappiness of which it is the immediate cause*. It is not often that *men* see the worst features of intemperance. To them, it appears in the groggery, or the tavern, stupid, disgusting, and quarrelsome; but it is the poor wife who must witness its horrors, and endure its curse. She beholds the excited monster in action, when he is turned loose, like an untamed beast, into the little world at home, where he

can rage without hindrance or restraint, and show his true character—selfish, sensual, and devilish. With ill-disguised horror she watches his return from the dram-shop, to claim the honored place of a husband and a father. She endeavors, by every skilful device, to shield him from the keen, scrutinizing glance of an unfeeling world, and to hide his faults even from his own children. What a thousand pities that a kind, amiable, useful man, should thus be transformed into a fiend!

7. Another reason for insisting stoutly against the use of intoxicating drinks, is the undoubted fact that *it leads directly to crime.*

I need not enlarge upon this head. The records of our criminal calendars are standing proofs that the statement just made is correct.

8. Once more. If no other reason could be urged for abstaining from strong drink, this would be sufficient, that *the Almighty has set His face against it.* “Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” See, also, Gal. v. 21.

Intemperance is self-murder, and this crime is to be punished with everlasting wretchedness in the world of woe. Driven from the position which we supposed him to occupy—where the drunkard was pleading that he could not be guilty of any serious wrong, because he injured no one but himself—he sometimes skilfully changes his tactics, and shrewdly asks, in the tone of a devout Christian, “Do you deny that our blessed Saviour *drank* wine, and not only so, but that He actually *made* it, in order that the marriage festiv

ties at the house of a friend might be conducted in the usual way? And, did not St. Paul, when Timothy, the Bishop of Ephesus, was in feeble health, advise him to use 'a little wine' for his 'stomach's sake,' and his 'oft infirmities?' All this I most readily grant. Besides, I must frankly say, that if our farmers would cultivate vineyards, and make such weak, pure wine as was once used in Eastern countries, it would not only be a wholesome, harmless beverage, but would do much towards stopping the terrible ravages of intemperance.

It was a sad day for the world when the old Arabian alchymist (A. D. 900) discovered the secret of extracting from the grain and fruits of the earth all that was valuable and nourishing, and leaving behind a poisonous spirit, which, for a season, deprives man of his reason, and, sooner or later, destroys his life. And it is melancholy to reflect that it is generally the generous and open-hearted who fall victims to strong drink. They are taken quite unawares, and have no intention of contracting so despicable and dangerous a habit.

The thoughtless father shares his sweetened morning dram with the children who are growing up around his table; the friend on the street invites others to go in with him to the neighboring bar-room, for a social glass; and the school-boy, in order to appear manly and reckless, pours down his potion of liquid fire. From these small beginnings, habits of intemperance are unconsciously formed, early graves are dug, and the torments of hell must be endured.



If such be the public, the private, and the personal evils which proceed from this cause, it may very naturally be asked, "What securities can we throw around ourselves, in order to be safe? Would it be to our advantage to become members of the Temperance Society?" While I am free to confess that such organizations have, in some cases, been beneficial, as a general thing they can hardly be considered as calculated to accomplish the object in view. One who stands so little in fear of his Maker as to persist in habits of intemperance, when God threatens him with everlasting punishment for his wrong-doing, cannot be expected to remain sober very long, out of regard to any pledge made to a fellow-being. Besides, we are told by St. Paul that "Temperance" is a fruit of the SPIRIT of God, no less than gentleness, goodness, and faith (Gal. v. 23), and hence it is only a mockery of the Almighty to pretend to curb or change human nature by other agencies than those which have been divinely appointed. The Church is a Temperance Society, and the school of every virtue. The Saviour, Who established it for this purpose, is its guide and governor, and He will give grace and strength to those who seek Him in the ways of His own appointment. Harsh and reproachful language is oftentimes employed, when expostulating with the drunkard, in regard to his deplorable course. This is both inexpedient and improper. Some of the best and noblest of our race have been in thralldom to the power of strong drink. Kindness is the only method which can possibly prevail. It is in such a spirit that I would

say to any one who may be in danger from this cause, "My dear brother, for whose redemption our blessed Saviour shed His precious blood, O, do not thus destroy both body and soul! Come back to the paths of sobriety and peace, and beseech God to give you strength to walk henceforth therein."

And finally (in the quaint language of the Homily), "let us, good people, eschew, every one of us, all intemperancy; let us love sobriety and moderate diet, oft give ourselves to abstinence and fasting, whereby the mind of man is more lift up to God, more ready to all godly exercises, as prayer, hearing and reading of God's Word, to His spiritual comfort."

## SERMON XLI.

### THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS.

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”—HEBREWS i. 14.

WHILE Richard Hooker, one of the fathers of English theology, was lying on his death-bed, he appeared so wholly engrossed in some serious contemplation, that a friend inquired what subject engaged his thoughts. He replied, that he was meditating on “the number and nature of Angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in Heaven; and, O that it might be upon earth!”

It is a beautiful custom of the Church which has taught her children to celebrate a yearly Festival, that they may ever keep in mind the important relations which these Celestial Ministrants sustain to the inhabitants of earth. We can hardly conceive it possible that God should appoint Beings of a nature so pure and exalted to attend upon those who are debased by sin, and who have repeatedly transgressed His righteous laws; and yet this is really the case.

Angels are created intelligences, ordained by the Almighty to execute His will in Heaven and earth. Glorious in their appearance, and rapid in their movements as the light; strangers to sin and sorrow, they

chant the praises of God in His Sanctuary above, and perform offices of love for such as shall be heirs of salvation. There have been times when men thought too much of the Angels; but this is not the fault of our day. Indeed, it is greatly to be desired that they should be held in higher estimation than they are. The wonderful harmony of Nature is the effect of their agency; and while we certainly owe all good things to God, He does not act *directly* in managing the affairs of the world, but "maketh His Angels spirits, and His Ministers a flaming fire." Psalm civ. 4. "It was an Angel," as one has justly observed, "which gave to the pool at Bethesda its medicinal quality; and there is no reason why we should doubt that other health-springs are made such by a like unseen ministry. The fires on Mount Sinai, the thunders and lightnings, were the works of Angels; and in the Apocalypse we read of the Angels restraining the four winds. Works of vengeance are likewise attributed to them. The fiery lava of the volcanoes, which (as it appears) was the cause of Sodom and Gomorrah's ruin, was caused by the two Angels who rescued Lot. The hosts of Sennacherib were destroyed by an Angel, by means (it is supposed) of a suffocating wind. The pestilence in Israel when David numbered the people, was the work of an Angel. In the Apocalypse, the earth is smitten in various ways by Angels with vengeance." If we look through the Bible, with reference to this subject, we shall be surprised to find how much has been revealed to us concerning the ministrations of these exalted Beings. From the day when they were seen by Adam in anger;

when they came to Abraham in mercy ; or met Jacob in his anxious suspense in regard to the treatment he might expect from Esau ; or rendered aid to Joshua, and the Judges of Israel ; or spoke comforting words to Daniel ; until the very close of the sacred record, Angels have been prominent actors in the most interesting and important events. While fallen spirits have been wandering abroad over the earth, to accomplish the ruin of its inhabitants, good Angels have been equally active to rescue God's children from the dominion of evil, and to afford them comfort in seasons of trial and temptation, and at the hour of death.

It was an Angel who came to Zachariah, and announced that St. John the Baptist should be born, and become the harbinger of the Messiah's reign. The same celestial visitant foretold to the Blessed Virgin Mary the honor which God had in store for her. An Angel appeared to Joseph, to remove all doubts from his troubled mind, and to assure him that it was through the miraculous influence of the Holy Spirit that his wife had conceived, and should bring forth a Son. While the humble shepherds watched their flocks on that long December night, near the town of Bethlehem, an Angel brought the glorious tidings : "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord !" When wicked Herod sought the young child's life, an Angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph, in a dream, and directed him to flee with his family into Egypt ; and after all danger was past, he was warned in the same manner, to return into the land of Israel. Twice, during our Saviour's public

ministry, do we read that Angels were sent to sustain and comfort him. At the close of His long fast of forty days and forty nights, when He endured the temptations and buffetings of Satan, "Angels came and ministered unto Him." And again, in the midst of those dreadful agonies in the Garden, when "His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood," there appeared "an Angel unto Him from Heaven, strengthening Him."

I need hardly remind you of the Angels that were present at His resurrection, nor of those who spoke such cheering words to the disconsolate Apostles, when Jesus ascended into Heaven, and sat down on the right hand of the Almighty Father.

During the lives of the chosen Twelve, the ministration of Angels continued as before. When Herod cast St. Peter into prison, and guarded the entrance with soldiers, it was the Angel of the Lord who delivered him from his chains, and bade him go free.

Is it God's will that the Gospel should be carried into the dark region of Ethiopia? An Angel directs the steps of St. Philip "unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza," and he is made the instrument of bringing the Royal Treasurer of Queen Candace into the Communion of the Church, and sending him home with the message of glad tidings. Cornelius, the devout Centurion, is charged by an Angel, in a vision, to send to Joppa for St. Peter, that he and his household may be instructed in Christian truth, and baptized. An Angel stands by St. Paul on that fearful occasion of his shipwreck, and gives him an assur-

ance of safety. And so, until the very close of the Revelation of St. John, holy Angels are represented as being constantly occupied in fulfilling the commandment of God. Neither are we to suppose that such agency is no longer employed.

The Apostle plainly intimates that they are *always* the helpers and comforters of God's children, when he asks, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Indeed, in another place, he assures us that when admitted to the privileges of Christ's Church, we come into the fellowship of "an innumerable company of Angels." Hebrews xii. 22. We are reminded of the same consoling truth in the sweet words of the hymn:

"Angels, and living saints and dead,  
But one communion make ;  
All join in Christ, their vital Head,  
And of His love partake.

That children have good Angels to guard them from danger, is clearly taught in the Scriptures. While our Blessed Saviour was one day embracing a little child in His arms, He said to those that stood by, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you that in Heaven their Angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in Heaven." St. Matt. xviii. 10.

What can this possibly mean but that children have guardian Angels, and are under the constant care of those glorious Beings who have "kept their first estate," and are ever in the presence of God in Heaven?

"Childhood is so tender, and yet so unwary," says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, "so soft to all the impressions of chance, and yet so forward to run into them, that God knew there could be no security without the care and vigilance of an Angel-keeper; and the arms of parents, and the eyes of nurses, the provisions of art, and the effects of human love and providence, are not sufficient to keep one child from horrid mischief, from strange and early calamities and death, unless a messenger be sent from Heaven to stand sentinel and watch over the very playthings and sleepings, the eatings and drinkings of the children."

*Grown people*, also, if possessed of child-like hearts are watched over by those exalted Beings who are "sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation." When St. Peter had been rescued from prison, by the interference of one of these bright spirits, and stood knocking for admission at the gate of Mary the mother of St. Mark, the Disciples gathered within could not believe that he had been delivered from his bonds, and said, in astonishment, "It is his Angel!" (Acts xii. 15), showing what opinion then prevailed concerning guardian Angels. And if the doctrine we are now advocating be untrue, what can be the force of such promises as these?—"The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Psalm xxxiv. 7. And "He shall give His Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Ps. xci. 11. And again, "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before



the Angel, that it was an error" (Eccles. v. 6); in other words, "Do not excuse yourself, and insist that you did not make a vow—when your guardian Angel heard you."

It appears that Angels feel a lively interest also, in those who are wanderers from God and strangers to His grace. "I say unto you," is our Saviour's declaration, "that there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." St. Luke xv. 10. The mysteries of redemption—the wonderful plan by which God can be just, and at the same time be reconciled to offending man—is one of those things "which the Angels desire to look into." 1 Peter i. 12. When the season of probation allotted to the inhabitants of this world is ended, Angels will attend about the throne of the Eternal Judge; consigning the wicked to the furnace of fire (St. Matt. xiii. 49, 50), and carrying the righteous to the regions of everlasting blessedness. The Apostle speaks of "Angels and just men made perfect," as if in a better world they were to associate together (Hebrews xii. 22-3); and our Saviour represents those who shall "be accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead," and the rewards of Heaven as made "like the Angels." St. Luke xx. 35.

These bright intelligences, "in their visits to this world of ours, gave man a glimpse of a higher and better world. They were *specimens*, so to speak, of what is to be found in the heavenly Canaan, our Land of Promise, answering to those fruits which the Spies, sent by Moses into Canaan, brought to the Israelites in the dreary and barren wilderness, in order to con-

vince them of the goodness of that pleasant land, and to encourage them to enter into it." Archbishop Whately's "Good and Evil Angels," p. 30.

Without entering into any vain speculations, it is proper to remark, that St. Paul intimates that there are various ranks and degrees of Angels, and some ancient writers have arranged them in three hierarchies—the first, consisting of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; the second, of Dominions, Might, and Powers; and the third, of Principalities, Archangels, and Angels.

In the Church service we recognize the three orders, of Archangels, Cherubim, and Seraphim. St. Michael is the only Archangel whose name is mentioned in the Scriptures. In one of the Lessons appointed for the Festival of *St. Michael and All Angels* (Daniel x.) he appears as the Champion and Guardian of the Jewish Church and nation. Fallen Angels stand out against him in behalf of the heathen tribes. In the 12th chapter of the Apocalypse, where war is said to be raging in Heaven, and "Michael and his Angels" are fighting 'against the Dragon,' the Archangel represents the power of God and principle of goodness overcoming the Devil, the great enemy of man. St. Jude describes the same mighty Archangel as contending with Satan "about the body of Moses"—it having been wisely ordered by God that the grave of the Lawgiver of Israel should be hidden, lest he might be made an idol by the Jews; and the Devil probably attempted to frustrate this design by having the body exhibited and worshipped.

The *number* of Angels is always represented in the

Scriptures as very great. The Psalmist describes the chariot of God as attended by twenty thousand. lxviii. 17. Daniel thus speaks of the attendants about His throne: "Thousand thousands of Angels ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him." vii. 10. On the eve of His crucifixion, our blessed Saviour said that although He seemed so deserted by God and man, He had only to pray to the Father, and "more than twelve legions of Angels" would instantly be sent to His relief (St. Matt. xxvi. 53)—more than seventy-two thousand! The *worship of Angels*, which is one of the sins of the Romish Church, was first introduced by a small sect in the fourth century, but the practice was condemned by the Council of Laodicea.

Without presuming to offer to them that adoration which alone is due to the Lord of Angels, we may well be grateful to Him, who of His tender love has sent them forth on their errands of mercy, and we ought devoutly to pray to Him "that as His holy Angels always do Him service in heaven, so by His appointment, they may succor and defend us on earth." Remembering how active *evil* spirits are in plotting our ruin, we may take courage in the reflection that *good* Angels are ready to lend us aid. Much as they might prefer to remain in their happy home, our Heavenly Father sends them forth to minister unto us. Although we see them not, they are conscious of what we do, and are present for our good by night and by day. With the spirits of glorified saints—perhaps with those whom we once loved and honored upon earth—they mourn

when we are laggards in the Christian race. "I know not," says Bishop Heber, in a letter of condolence to a bereaved friend, "I know not (indeed who can know?) whether the spirits of the just are ever permitted to hover over those whom they have loved most tenderly, but if such permission be given—and who can say it is impossible?—then it must greatly increase your brother's present happiness, and greatly diminish that painful sense of separation which even the souls of the righteous may be supposed to feel, if he sees you resigned, patient, hopeful, trusting in that Cross which was his refuge in the hour of dread, and that good Providence to Whose care he fervently and faithfully committed you."

Blessed condition of God's dear children, who are never left to themselves, and who are never exposed to the wiles of the devil, without the guardianship of Angels!

"They that be with us, are more than they that be" arrayed against us (2 Kings vi. 16), if we are but faithful to the vows of our Baptism. When we consider, my friends, that Angels are witnesses of all that we do, let them never have cause to feel ashamed of us, nor to carry back an unfavorable report to Him who sent them. "Let not our conduct be such (Bishop Horne beautifully remarks) as shall oblige them to quit their charge before the time." O terrible voice, that was once heard at midnight in the Temple at Jerusalem, foreboding its destruction, then near at hand, "Let us go hence!" "Whoso defileth the temple of God, him shall God destroy." Our bodies are such

temples. May no unlawful desires, no irregular passions, ever so desecrate them, as that conscience shall ring in our ears the same dreadful sound; but may our Heavenly friends and guardians continue with us to the end, to comfort us in our last sorrows, and support us in our expiring agonies; that when breath shall forsake the body, the soul may be "carried by Angels into Abraham's bosom."

## SERMON XLII.

### THE HOLY CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

“ They found Him in the Temple.—ST. LUKE ii. 46.

THE Christian dwells with delight on all that is told him of the Saviour's early years. It is true, the record is extremely brief, but quite full enough to afford the mind much food for thought, and the heart good occasions for improvement.

The Holy Child Jesus was subject to the various laws and conditions of our nature. St. Irenæus has beautifully remarked, that the Saviour came “ not disdaining, nor going in a way above, nature, nor breaking in His own person the law which He had set for mankind ; but sanctifying every age by the likeness it bears to Him. For He comes to save all men by himself—all, I mean, who are by Him born again unto God ;—infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and those of older age. Therefore He went through the several ages ; for the sake of infants being made an infant, sanctifying infants : to little ones He was a little one, sanctifying those of that age, and giving them an example of godliness, righteousness, and dutiful subjection.” Lib. ii. c. 39.

The incidents connected with the text are both interesting and instructive. At the age of twelve years, the Holy Child Jesus went up to Jerusalem, with His

reputed parents, to keep the Feast of the Passover. Having attended to all the observances required by the law, they set out on their return to Nazareth, in company with their friends who were travelling the same road. At the close of the day, Joseph and Mary were greatly distressed at not finding the Child Jesus, having supposed, until they sought for Him, that He had been among their kinsfolk and acquaintances.

Some modern skeptics have represented this as so improbable, as to throw discredit upon the truth of the whole narrative. A better acquaintance with the customs of the East, might have saved them from coming to so rash and sinful a conclusion. The usual rate of travelling in those countries is about three miles an hour, and twenty, or twenty-five miles, is a good day's journey.

On setting out on an expedition, it is usual for the caravan to halt, the first night, at the distance of six or eight miles from the point of departure, so that any thing which has been accidentally left behind may be easily recovered. "Tradition has fixed on El-Birch, less than three hours north of Jerusalem, as the place where the 'Holy Family' stopped at the close of the first day, and where they turned back to the city in order to seek the Child, on discovering that He was absent. How entirely natural, that in the crowd of a caravan, the members of a family shall be separated from each other for two or three hours, and especially when one of the objects of stopping so soon was to see whether the party was complete." Hackett's *Illustrations of Scripture*, p. 20. During three anxious

days, Joseph and Mary are searching for the lost Child. As a last resort, they proceed to the Temple, where He is found, seated in the midst of the learned doctors, "hearing them, and asking them questions."

The skill of the great masters has been exhausted in trying to depict this scene. In some of their efforts, the Holy Child appears in the Temple, teaching, with uplifted hand, while gray-headed Rabbis look upon Him with amazement. Joseph and Mary occupy the foreground of the picture, and the Virgin-mother is addressing Him, in the words of gentle rebuke, "Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."

"In the early examples she is a principal figure, but in latter pictures she is seen entering in the background; and where the scene relates only to the life of Christ, the figures of Joseph and Mary are omitted altogether, and the Child teacher becomes the central, or at least the chief personage in the group." Mrs. Jameson's *Legends of the Madonna*, pp. 407-8.

Without setting up one's self as a critic, the careful reader of the sacred narrative may venture to suggest that the idea of representing the Holy Child as sitting as a *teacher* of the learned doctors, and laying down the law to Scribes and Pharisees, is hardly warranted by the language of the evangelist. We are not told that *they* heard *Him*, but that *He* heard *them*. This position of a *learner* is much more consistent with His character of humility and meekness, than to suppose the boy of twelve years to be setting Himself above His elders, and that those proud men quietly submitted to His dictation.



When Jesus was grown up, and had begun His public ministry, one of His lessons to the people was that the Scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' seat (St. Matt. xxiii. 2), in other words, that they held an official station in the Church, and that until God Who placed them there, saw fit to remove them, they should be listened to with respect, no matter how poorly they might practice the principles which they taught.

No doubt one reason why our Saviour thus appeared in the Temple as a learner, was to show His followers, in all after time, that respect and reverence should be paid to God's ministering servants. See the 26th Article of Religion. It was a beautiful custom among the Jews (which is still observed in Palestine), that they received instruction from their Rabbis, in the character of scholars, all their lives, unless they themselves should be appointed teachers. This fact throws light upon the common, and, as it seems to be, the correct opinion, that St. Paul was a pupil of Gamaliel at the time of his conversion, which was long after he became a man. What a quiet reproof is given here, to the ambitious youths of our own generation, who at so early a period spurn the authority of teachers, and break away from all wholesome restraint!

Before going on to make the special application of our subject, it will be well enough to remind you how the incidents of the early youth of Jesus, upon which we are commenting, concur with the miraculous circumstances attending His birth; thus showing that the Jews of that day possessed the clearest proofs of His divinity, if they would only examine them with

unprejudiced minds. When He appeared in the Synagogue at Nazareth, nearly twenty years after His memorable interview with the learned doctors at Jerusalem, and declared that "the Spirit of the Lord had anointed Him to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (St. Luke xiv. 16), it was inexcusable in His fellow-townsmen to ask, either in a spirit of ridicule or unbelief, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Whence hath this man all these things?" St. Matt. xiii. 54. There were those then living, who could tell of His birth at Bethlehem, and of the choir of angels which announced it; of the wise men who had come from the East, under guidance of a star, and had paid homage to the Holy Child; and that persons of the most undoubted piety had claimed Him as the long-promised Messiah. Neither could His conference with the Scribes and Pharisees, at Jerusalem, in His twelfth year, have been forgotten.

It is true, He may have toiled with Joseph, in the carpenter's shop, and there may have been no halo about His head, such as we see in pictures; yet there were intimations enough, for those not wilfully blind, that Jesus had come into the world on some great errand, not to do His own will, but the will of the Almighty Father Who sent Him.

Some one has beautifully observed, that when Joseph and Mary were engaged in their anxious search for the lost Child, they had at last directed their weary steps to the Temple, to pray to God for guidance and success; believing that if they could find God, they should not long be left in ignorance where to look for

the Holy Jesus. And it is in the Lord's Temple that we shall search for Jesus, when we really desire to find Him. So much for the *general* lessons, which all of us may learn.

The other, we desire to impress on the minds of parents and guardians: Joseph and Mary found the Holy Child Jesus in the Temple, engaged in the contemplation of Heavenly things. In this particular of His life, as in all things else, He was leaving an example for others. Though He was to be the world's *Teacher*, and the world's *Redeemer*, we find Him, at the age of twelve, sitting as a learner, at the feet of those who were the duly appointed expounders of God's law. And so, we argue, should all children, from their earliest years, be brought to God's House, and taught to be reverent there, and to take part in His holy worship. Surely, those are no unmeaning words, which the Church addresses to sponsors, whenever a child has been presented for Baptism: "That he may know his Christian duties and obligations the better, ye shall call upon him to hear sermons"—plainly implying a regular attendance at church. And that this is not a mere formal thing, and out of regard to decency alone, but for high and holy purposes, may be gathered from that general direction in the Book of Psalms—a *rubric*, if you please, of universal obligation—"Young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the Name of the Lord." cxlviii. 12.

Instead of seeing children come sauntering into church, after the service has begun, and sitting down near the door, prepared to make a sudden exit, when-

ever the notion takes them; how beautiful to behold them in the same pew with their parents, Prayer Book in hand, uniting in the responses, and lisping the praises of the Most High! No child thus taught ever complains of being weary, and it is only such as are left to dawdle in their seats, while others are kneeling, and standing, and worshipping, who imagine the time thus occupied to be dreadfully long. Like the Holy Child Jesus in the Temple, they will love the habitation of their Heavenly Father's house, and the place where His honor dwelleth. They will learn to feel as lively an interest as their elders do in the yearly return of the Holy Days, which commemorate the great events of His earthly sojourn.

People and realms, of every tongue,  
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;  
And infant voices shall proclaim  
Their early blessings on His name.

I sincerely believe that no child that is properly trained up in religion's pleasant and peaceful ways, will ever become a reprobate man or woman. Does not God promise as much? Proverbs xxii. 6. Verily, "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings," He is daily perfecting praise. What a charm there is in the piety of children, and how beautiful to discover in the soul of a little one, the image of the Divine Redeemer! Without encouraging the sickly cant which the prodigies in story books are sometimes made to utter, every Christian parent, if he will do his duty, may see his children growing up into the likeness of JESUS.

Children's prayers He deigns to hear,  
Children's songs delight His ear.

-Can it be said of you, my friends, as of Joseph and Mary in the text, that *your* child is in the Lord's Temple? Has that child been taught and encouraged by you, to bear its part in public worship? It is only by painstaking efforts, blessed by the influences of God's SPIRIT, that our sons can be expected to grow up as the young plants, and our daughters become as the polished corners of the Temple.

## SERMON XLIII.

### SATAN AND HIS WARFARE.

“Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.”—EPHESIANS vi. 11.

It is really astonishing to notice under what a variety of forms error insinuates itself into the minds of men. Notwithstanding the great plainness with which the personality of Satan, and the nature of his devices are taught in the Scriptures, modern philosophy has ventured to assert that no such being exists, and that the names by which he is distinguished in the Bible are merely designed to express an evil quality, or a collection of evil principles!

I have no time, now, to discuss this question at large. Let an examination of a single passage suffice. St. John says, “Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous; he that committeth sin is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the beginning.” 1 John iii. 7-8.

Adopt the interpretation which has just been referred to, and what sense is left in the passage? The strong and expressive language of St. John is made to speak this absurdity: “*The principle of evil* sinned from the beginning!”

In examining the text, we are called to notice three things: First, the character of the great adversary of

our race. Secondly, the nature of his devices; and, thirdly, the means by which his dangerous wiles may be successfully withstood.

I. First, then, a few words concerning the character of this great adversary :

St. Paul here calls him the DEVIL. He is also spoken of in other parts of the Bible as Abaddon, Beelzebub, Belial, the Dragon, the Evil One, the Angel of the Bottomless Pit, the Prince of this World, the Prince of the Power of the Air, Satan, Apollyon, and the God of this World.

Once he was a pure and happy spirit, rejoicing in the presence of God, but, in an evil hour, pride led him to rebel against the authority of the MOST HIGH, and he and his followers were punished for their wickedness, by being cast down to Hell. 2 Peter ii. 4; and Jude ver. 6.

Although fallen beings, they, like the Angels of Light, "still excel in strength" (Ps. ciii. 20), and are far "greater in power and might" (2 Pet. ii. 11) than any of the sons of men. Satan, who led the rebellion in Heaven, is now the head and ruler of a vast army of evil spirits; and, very often, the deeds performed by these inferior agents are said to be done by him, just as the victory gained by thousands of soldiers is spoken of as if achieved by the general who commands them, and the acts of a whole nation are charged upon the king or governor.

We may fairly conclude, from various passages of Scripture, that the number of evil spirits is great, and perhaps, exceeds that of human beings. St. Mark v. 9,

and xvi. 9, etc. As in a well appointed army, there are different ranks and degrees among them. Beelzebub, or Satan, is called "The *Prince* of Devils" (St. Matt. xii. 24), and St. Paul, when warning the Christians of Ephesus against these powerful foes, declares: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." vi. 12-13.

The Devil and his Angels are not to be delivered over to final punishment until the "judgment of the great day." Meanwhile they are waging a ceaseless and deadly warfare against the children of God. For this reason Satan is called "The *Prince* of this World" (St. John xii. 31), and "The *God* of this World," who blinds the minds of unbelievers, "lest the light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST should shine unto them." 2 Corinth. iv. 4.

Moreover, he is said to inspire men with sinful thoughts, and to fill them with deceit, and lust, and revenge. Hence, we read of him as "The Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Ephes. ii. 2.

The existence, the moral propensities, and the agency of the Devil are fully brought out to view in every part of the Bible; and, in drawing the portrait of this terrible enemy of humanity, the writers of the several books use the same images, and preserve a perfect identity of character—a character distinguished by force, cruelty, malignity, and fraud. The arch-deceiver and destroyer, who appears in Genesis as a *Serpent*, is



referred to by St. John in the Apocalypse (xii. 9) as "that old Serpent the Devil, which deceiveth the whole world."

Having thus gained some insight into the character of our great adversary, we pass on,

II. To examine, with equal brevity, *the nature of the devices by which he would draw us into sin.*

And here, it should be remembered, that while Satan has the power of making sin appear attractive, he cannot *compel* us to do wrong. No one whose tastes and desires are not in harmony with the allurements which the Devil spreads out before him, is in danger of being led astray by his devices. "Every man is tempted," says St. James, "when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." (i. 14.)

Having once been pure and holy, the lost Archangel realizes the greatness of his fall; and grief, anger, and revenge, all combine to render him the bitter enemy of every thing good. Hence, all his arts are directed to one end, viz.: to draw us away from God, and to accomplish our ruin. And very wonderful and successful is the mode of his warfare. Acting upon the rule of expediency, he never begins his assaults by a direct contradiction of the truth, but by a qualified admission of its claims, he seems to agree with his victim, while he is only making ready to come down upon him in an unguarded quarter.

It might reasonably be supposed that one who ventured to make war in Heaven is a skilful and experienced leader, whose craft and boldness would render him a dangerous enemy upon earth.

"The wiles of the Devil" are marked by all those characteristics which prove him to be a most treacherous and deadly foe. His forces are scattered over the world, busy in executing his commands, and all our weaknesses are spied out, and the corresponding enticements presented. The covetous, the rash, the desponding, the unchaste, the proud, the ambitious, the dishonest, all find a temptation placed in their way which is best calculated to attract and beguile; and the cunning tempter assures them that their offences will either never be found out, or, that no harm will come of them. Men may give up the whole of their time to business, or pleasure, or sin, and the Devil will leave them alone. They are thus accomplishing their own ruin as fast as he could possibly desire. But let them manifest the smallest disposition to devote themselves to higher and holier pursuits, and Satan will instantly be on the alert to prevent it. He has a successful way of *blinding* people so that they do not discover their real interests. When Antiochus entered into the Sanctuary of the Lord, he bore away, with unholy hands, the golden altar and the candlesticks for light; and Nebuchadnezzar, having conquered Zedekiah, put out his eyes, and bound him with chains, that he might the more readily carry him off into servitude. In the same manner the Devil, when he gains admission into the soul of man (that soul which was made to be a temple for God's Holy Spirit), his first business is to put out the light of the understanding, that his miserable captive may be forced to submit to every exaction of his new master.

Is one half persuaded to become a follower of JESUS? Satan's plans are forthwith arranged to persuade him to change his determination. Sometimes he sends a crowd of gay and thoughtless companions to draw him into the dangerous whirlpool of fashionable amusements; or, he cautiously whispers that religion will overshadow the brightness of his existence with moping and melancholy, and, perhaps, seriously interfere with his prospects in life; or, else he will tell him that there is an abundance of time, and that he may as well secure his share of worldly delights; or, he hints that God is a hard task-master, and that it would be wiser to escape from His service as long as it can safely be done; or, he reminds him that many of his familiar friends will be ready to ridicule his open profession of the SAVIOUR; or, he assures him that the Lord is so merciful that he will never be called to a strict account for his misdoings; and, when all these crafty devices fail, he will shift his ground, and try to drive him to despair, by representing the ALMIGHTY as a jealous God; that his offences are already too many to be pardoned, and that, as all hope of Heaven is lost, he cannot do otherwise than to take his ease: and eat, drink, and be merry.

Has another actually turned his back on the adversary, and been made a member of CHRIST in Baptism, and renewed his vows in Confirmation, how active the Devil will be to recover the ground which he has lost! "You were quite too hasty in taking so serious and decided a step" (the false fiend will venture to say); "be sure you do not commit yourself any further. Do

not let the most urgent persuasions of your minister draw you on to the Lord's Table. Think of the pleasures you will lose; the cheerful company you must abandon; the rare indulgences you must forego; the ridicule you must encounter; the galling yoke you must carry; the rigid rules you must observe; the dreary life of watchfulness and prayer you must lead. Tarry with me for the present. Hereafter, if you see fit to serve God, I will grant you a seasonable discharge."

Has a third gone so far as to have tasted of the good gift of God, in the most comfortable Sacrament of CHRIST's body and blood, all the powers of Hell will be in commotion; and the forces of the great adversary will be marshalled for a fresh and more vigorous assault.

Naturalists report that when the chameleon stretches itself on the grass to catch flies and grasshoppers, it assumes a green color to prevent detection; and that the polypus changes himself into the sombre hue of the rock, under which he lurks, that the fish may come within his reach without suspicion of danger. And thus the Devil, in spreading his net for unwary Christians, turns himself into the shape which they least suspect, and allures them with temptations most agreeable to their natures.

When he discovers the Christian on his knees, the Prince of Darkness will draw near to fill his mind with vain and distracting thoughts. If he sits down to spend a half hour in self-examination, the adversary will soon provide some other occupation for him, on

the ground that this work of self-examination is needless. Should the Christian persist in his determination, a thousand conflicting and sinful imaginations will interrupt and perplex him.

If Satan finds that he is bent on knowing the real state of his heart, he will come in the garb of an Angel of Light, and show him more of his sinfulness than he had ever dreamed of; and then slyly insinuate that he is too wicked to be fancying himself a Christian, and that it would be better to discard his religious professions altogether than to be accused of wearing the cloak of hypocrisy.

When the child of God is elated with joy, or cast down by sorrow, the Devil redoubles his efforts. Carefully concealing the real object of his attack, he will make his advances by slow degrees, and, if the least encouragement be given, he will not leave until every defence has been thrown down, and a complete victory gained. Now if such be the perils which encompass us, how important to be reminded of the way of escape.

This is the

III, and last point in the text. "*Put on the whole armor of God.*" Our strength, my friends, is perfect weakness; but the good and gracious Lord is ready to "open His armory" (Jeremiah 1. 25) and equip those who acknowledge their helplessness, and seek for His sustaining grace. The armor is given us for *use*, and if we expect any benefit from it we must not delay to *put it on*. Our beautiful hymn (the 88th), for the "Baptism of Adults," suggests one important mode of doing this.

But we must not be satisfied with having *one* part protected. We are commanded to "put on *the whole* armor of God." To guard the *head* from the "fiery darts of the wicked" there is the "*helmet* of Salvation." To protect the *heart* from the assaults of sin we have "*the breast-plate* of righteousness." That his feet may be preserved from the ruggedness of the path the Christian is "shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." That each part of this armor of light may be confined in its proper place, the loins are strengthened with the "*girdle of truth*." Lest any point should remain unprotected, God furnishes us with "*the shield of faith*," which can readily be turned towards any quarter from whence Satan seems disposed to make his assault. And, besides this *defensive* armor, the Christian is told to take "*the sword* of the *Spirit*, which is the Word of God." Armed with this sharp weapon, and supported by Divine grace, he can go forth as a conquering hero.

There is a Devil, my friends, and a terrible being he is; but if we have "put on the whole armor of God," and are true to ourselves, and to the great CAPTAIN of our Salvation, we need never be afraid of him.

## SERMON XLIV.

### SEEKING AFTER THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

“If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding : if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures : then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.”—PROVERBS ii. 3, 4, 5.

A FEW years since, public attention was arrested by strange rumors from a distant portion of our own land, which caused the staid and steady yeomanry to pause amidst their toils, and turn with longing gaze towards regions rich with gold. A dull and disagreeable trading coast, washed by the waters of the Pacific, suddenly became busy and bustling, like the heart of some great metropolis. Emigrants, with eager haste, directed their steps thitherward. The hill-sides about the favored spot were thickly covered with canvas-tents, and arbors hastily constructed of luxuriant boughs; and hundreds of laborers endured the glare and burning heat of the summer's sun, and the blasts and roughnesses of winter, in their greedy pursuit of gain. America had reproduced in her Mexican conquests the brilliant exploits of Cortez, and her daring explorers in California lived over again the romantic dreams, and the bold adventures of Columbus and his followers, in the golden-watered Cibao.

Let the mind stretch onward, for a few brief years,

and where are all these busy adventurers, and the treasures which they so anxiously sought? Gone forever!—But the picture which I have sketched will not be without its use. The self-sacrificing spirit displayed by these determined men: their patience under difficulties: their untiring perseverance in the accumulation of worldly wealth; should teach us a lesson, in our pursuit of the true and enduring riches. Such is the bearing of the text. *“If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.”*

Solomon, the wise King of Israel, was well qualified to give advice to others, in reference to the subject embraced in the text. His knowledge extended itself on every side, and matters physical and theological, natural and artificial, were equally familiar to him. Strangers came from distant regions, to drink in wisdom from his lips. So admirable was his administration of public affairs, that the borders of Israel were widely extended, and during a long reign of forty years, the din of war was scarcely heard. In his writings, Solomon sometimes speaks in the person, and always under the inspiration—of “the wisdom of God.” Well, therefore, may we hearken to the lessons which he imparts.

Several words are used in the text, and others are employed in different parts of the Book of Proverbs, to describe that “fear of the Lord” which is the very “beginning of wisdom,” but I shall not stop to collect



them together, nor attempt to trace out the various shades of meaning which these expressions may have been designed to convey.

It will serve my present purpose to consider them as different modes of describing that "hidden wisdom, which for ages and generations" has been kept back from "the wise and prudent," but which God graciously imparts to those who seek for it with the meekness and humility of "babes." This knowledge is indeed "more precious than rubies," since this alone can make us "wise unto salvation."

Job tells us, "It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir." xxviii. 15-16. The words of wisdom are of far more worth than these.

"They be grains of the diamond sand, the radiant floor of Heaven, Rising in sunny dust behind the chariot of God :

"They be flashes of the day-spring from on high, shed from the windows of the skies : They be streams of living water, fresh from the fountain of Intelligence."

The question for examination is now brought down to a narrow compass : *How is this wisdom to be obtained ?*

The All-wise ONE, alone, can bestow it upon us. HE is the God of Wisdom. "Out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." Prov. ii. 6. He has given His only SON to be "made *wisdom* unto us" (1 Cor. i. 30), and in HIM, as an inexhaustible mine, all the priceless treasures of wisdom are stored up.

The wise man, borrowing his beautiful and striking figures from the case of those seeking for worldly gain, has taught us what to do. The promise of *finding* "the knowledge of God," all depends upon the *mode* in which it is sought. The only sure and successful way is to "*cry aloud* after knowledge, and to *lift up the voice* for understanding: to seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures."

The Chaldee version of the Scriptures renders '*criest*' by a word which denotes the anxious and importunate calling of a little child upon the attention of a parent; thus expressing, most forcibly, the earnest longing after Heavenly wisdom, which will be felt by those who know its worth. This figure suggests that *prayer* is needed. St. James sets forth this in plain words. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, WHO giveth to all men liberally, and it shall be given him." i. 5.

We must pray God to bless the reading of His Word to our soul's good, and to send the HOLY SPIRIT to instruct us. It would be well for every Christian to commit the beautiful Collect for the *Second Sunday in Advent* to memory, and to use it, before reading his daily portion of Holy Scripture. Devout persons, when they come into the House of the Lord, are accustomed to breathe a silent prayer, that the services may be blessed to them: and when the benediction has been pronounced, they pause for a moment on their knees, and ask God to enable them to profit by the truths which they have heard.

Many people read their Bibles through once a year

and listen to sermons every Sunday, and yet make no progress in the attainment of everlasting salvation. This may be readily accounted for, since they neglect to pray for the guidance, and for the enlightening influences of the BLESSED SPIRIT. "We are all too little in this humble seeking and begging of DIVINE knowledge (says good Bishop Leighton), and this is the cause we are so shallow and small proficient. Sit down upon thy knees and dig for it; that is the best posture to fall right upon the golden vein, and go deepest to know the mind of God, in searching the Scriptures, to be directed and regulated in His ways, to be made skilful in ways of honoring HIM, and doing HIM service."

It is a distinguishing characteristic of the unrenewed man, that he is "wise in his own conceit;" and there is a wholesome truth expressed in the homely saying, "He that is his own teacher has a fool for his master!" We have never learned the secret of finding knowledge, until we pray with the Psalmist, "Open THOU mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of THY law!" Ps. cxix. 18.

It is related of one of the Reformers, that having acquitted himself in a public debate with much credit to his MASTER'S cause, a friend begged to see the notes which the able controversialist had taken down during the discussion, supposing, of course, that they contained the arguments of his opponents, and an outline of his own reply. What was the astonishment of this friend to find that the notes consisted simply of these

earnest ejaculations to the GIVER of all wisdom, "More light, O Lord! more light!"

The concluding portion of the text suggests other points of equal importance. "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Those who have set their hearts on becoming rich, make it the main object of pursuit. Every thing else seems of comparatively small importance. Look at the gold-diggers, in that scene of enchantment, to which I have before referred. The sweet securities of home have been given up; the dearest kindred left; every danger dared; all kinds of hardships met;—and this for the sake of the shining dust which cannot purchase one moment's peace, or prolong one brief and uncertain span for a single day.

"Wisdom is the principal thing," says Solomon, "therefore get wisdom." Prov. iv. 7. And shall this inestimable treasure be sought after with less anxious care, than the glittering gold? Can you be so deceived, my friends, by the persuasive voice of foolish pride, and greedy avarice, and mad ambition, as to make more provision for the wants of the perishing body, than for the deathless soul? And is not this the case with those whose chief concern is to "buy and sell, and get gain," while thoughts of God and of the eternal world are pushed quite out of view? Can you ever hope to become "wise unto salvation," while thus keeping away from God's school of training—His

holy Church—in which “pastors and teachers” are waiting to aid you in this work?

Again. The language employed in the text suggests that Heavenly wisdom must be sought for with *earnestness* and *perseverance*; with an earnestness which no difficulties can dampen, and a perseverance which no opposition can overcome. “I can speak it by experience,” says Erasmus, “that there is little good to be gotten by reading the Bible curiously and carelessly. But do it daily and diligently, with attention and affection, and you shall find such an efficacy, as is to be found in no other book that can be named.”

Watch the miner at his toil! How he searches and scrutinizes, and spares no pains, in looking after the hidden treasure. And so our SAVIOUR’S direction to “*Search the Scriptures*” (St. John v. 39), means much more than a mere skimming over the surface, and the gathering up a few crude notions of doctrine and duty. “The rule of success is—Dig up and down the field; and if the search be discouraging—dig again. The patient industry of perusal and re-perusal will open the embosomed treasure. ‘Surely there is a vein for the silver.’ Job xxviii. 1. Yet what miner would be content with the first ore? Would he not *search* deeper and deeper, until he has possessed himself of the whole treasure; not satisfied with taking away much, but determined to leave nothing? Thus let it be our daily exercise to explore the length, and the breadth, and the depth of our boundless stores until we be ‘filled with all the fulness of God.’” \*

\* Bridge’s Exposition of Proverbs, p. 13, 14.

It would be almost *unfashionable*, in these times, not to have a handsome copy of the Bible lying in some conspicuous place in our houses ; and it might be very safe to say that there are but few persons among us who do not, at least, occasionally, read a chapter here and there. But can this be called *searching* the Scriptures ? Does this careless superficial reading of the Bible correspond, in any degree, to the patient, persevering, prayerful attention, which the importance of the subject demands ? Is this *crying* after knowledge, and *lifting up the voice* for understanding ? Is this *seeking* for Heavenly wisdom *as silver*, and *searching for it as for hid treasures* ?

The true Christian is distinguished from the nominal one by his attachment to the Bible. Robert, King of Sicily, used to say, that the Holy Scriptures were dearer to him than his Kingdom, and that if obliged to give up one, it should be his diadem. The Emperor Theodosius wrote out the whole of the New Testament with his own hand, and studied some portion of it, most carefully, every day. Sir Henry Wotton devoted several hours, out of the twenty-four, to searching the Scriptures. A poor prisoner who was confined to a dark dungeon, and had no light except for a few moments when his food was brought in, was accustomed to take his Bible and read a chapter, saying that he could find his mouth in the dark, when he could not read.

It is related of Beza, that after he became so old that he could not remember the names of persons and things he had heard only a short time before, he could

repeat the whole of St. Paul's Epistles, which he had committed to memory in his youth.

O, my friends, how do such examples put us to the blush for our neglect of God's word!

The ALMIGHTY might have left us to learn our duty by word of mouth—and many of His servants, in olden times, had no written message from Heaven to guide them. But He has been more gracious to us, and we have the Bible with us always, as a sort of school-master, placed there by HIM, to instruct us on dismal winter nights, or when we are alone, and other teachers are not likely to be found. What thankfulness we should feel for this! How great and well-deserved our condemnation, if we fail to use this gift aright! It is sad to think that many who claim to be Christians, read the Bible with far less interest than they do a newspaper, or the most indifferent and worthless novel. Does not this show, plainly enough, that their hopes and affections are not really fixed on things above?

If we always remembered that the Bible was the guide book to point out the way to our eternal home, and that it made us acquainted with the goodness and the perfections of our adorable REDEEMER—such indifference for it could never be manifested. "We know how a little child or a dear friend, loved, but taken from us by death, fills every place with associations that bring him up before the mind. So it is with the true Christian in reading the Scriptures; his heart is full of CHRIST, and the Bible is full of CHRIST, like as a house is full of associations of its loved but

lost occupants ; need we wonder, then, that the Christian sees CHRIST everywhere ? If he open at Genesis in its first chapter, the Son of God is there as a Creator : if he dwell upon the concluding verse of Revelation, the name of Jesus is last breathed to his ears by the harp of inspiration as it dies away in silence ;—if he read the law, it is a school-master to bring him to CHRIST : the types foreshadow HIM ; the Prophets reveal HIM ; and the Gospels set HIM forth as God manifest in the flesh.”

I shall have preached to some purpose, to-day, if what has been said, shall lead the neglecters of the Bible to prize it more, and to study it with greater diligence and care.

O may these Heavenly pages be  
My ever dear delight ;  
And still new beauties may I see,  
And still increasing light !



## SERMON XLV.

### HONORING THE LORD'S DAY.

"When will the new-moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?"—Amos viii. 5.

"WHILE industry is suspended," says Macaulay, "while the plough rests in the furrow, while the exchange is silent, while no smoke ascends from the factory, a process is going on quite as important to the wealth of nations as any that is performed on busier days. Man, the machine of machines, compared with which all the contrivances of the Watts and Arkwrights are worthless, is *repairing* and *winding up*; so that he returns to his labor on Monday with clearer intellect, with livelier spirits, with renewed bodily vigor."

This is a low and time-serving view, to be taken of the great duty of honoring the LORD'S day; but it is one which ought not to be lost sight of, when we are estimating the benefits and blessings of such observance. *The physical wants of man demand a day of rest*; and it is a gracious appointment of the ALL-WISE ONE, which has secured it to him. No constitution, however robust, can endure the wear and tear of unceasing labor. Those who have made the experiment have paid dearly for it. William Pitt, the

great English statesman, thought that the business of the realm was so important and pressing, that Sunday might properly be used, for its accomplishment.

The constant load of care upon his mind, brought on a stroke of apoplexy, and he died at the early age of forty-seven.

Mr. Wilberforce, who was never harsh in his judgments of men, and their doings, when speaking of the suicide of Lord Castlereagh, another distinguished Cabinet Minister, ascribed his mental derangement to his neglect of the Lord's day.

The most learned physicians, in all Christian countries, have agreed in the opinion, that the due observance of a day of rest is absolutely indispensable, as a compensation for the inadequate restorative power of the body, under continued labor and excitement.

In 1839, a committee was appointed by the Legislature of Pennsylvania, who made a report in regard to the employment of laborers on their canals, and they say, in reference to those who had petitioned that Sunday might not be desecrated by unnecessary work, "They assert, as the result of their experience, that both man and beast can do more work by resting one day in seven, than by working the whole time." The Committee add, "we feel free to confess, that our own experience as business men, farmers, or legislators, corresponds with the assertion."

An experiment was once tried in England, on a grand scale. Two thousand men were employed for years, seven days in a week. To make them contented to give up the blessed privilege of resting on

Sundays, they received double wages for that day; or, eight days' wages for seven days' work. It was found, however, utterly impossible to keep them healthy or moral. Things went on so badly, that the old custom of resting on the Lord's day was revived, and that, too, with immediate results. More work was accomplished in six days, than in seven, and the laborers were more sober and honest.

And yet, notwithstanding the plainest evidences that the appointment of such a day of rest is for man's best interests, even in *temporal* things, there are always head-strong and worldly-minded people to be found, so eaten up by covetousness, that they are disposed to cry out, in the complaining language of the text, "*When will the Sabbath be past, that we may sell wheat?*"

*The same physical law which requires that man should have his day of rest, applies also to the brute creation.* It is for this reason that our HEAVENLY FATHER mentions them in the fourth Commandment, and gives express direction that they shall be released from their toils on the Sabbath. Numberless examples might be given, illustrating this point. In making the land route to California, the companies which rest on Sunday invariably reach their destinations before those which journey forward without regard to God's appointments.

A traveller halting at a tavern on Saturday night, was asked whether he intended to proceed on his way, the next morning. He answered in the negative, and gave as a reason, that he had a long distance to go, and that he wished to accomplish the journey as soon

as he could. Experience had taught him, that a horse which had rested on Sunday, could go farther the next week, than one to which no such indulgence had been shown.

A manufacturing company, which had been accustomed to carry their goods to market with their own teams, kept them employed seven days in a week, that being the time required for going to the market, and returning. They found, however, by allowing the beasts to rest on Sundays, that they could drive them the same distance in six days, as they had formerly done in seven—and, with no more expense for keeping, preserve them in better order.

While man and beast are thus decidedly the gainers, from observing the beneficent appointment of their CREATOR—can we be expected to listen with patience, while the despisers of GOD'S law ask, in words of cool contempt, "*When will the Sabbath be past, that we may sell wheat?*"

But besides the actual benefits secured by those who honor the LORD'S day, they are saved from many evils which naturally grow out of a disregard for it.

The chaplain to Newgate prison, whose official station often led him to hear the confessions of malefactors, under sentence of death, once remarked, in a sermon, that in almost every instance, they ascribed their ruin to their desertion of the House of God, and to their violation of the day of rest.

An English gentleman who, for more than twenty years, had been in the daily habit of visiting, and conversing with convicts, states that almost universally

when brought to a sense of their miserable condition, they lamented their neglect of Sunday, and pointed to their desecration of it as the principal cause of their ruin. This led them on, from step to step, to the commission of other sins, and, at last, to some crowning act of wickedness, which brought them to the prison, or the gallows.

A distinguished merchant, long accustomed to extensive observation of men, was often heard to say "Whenever I discover one of my clerks to be a wilful neglecter of the Lord's day, I forthwith dismiss him. Such persons cannot be trusted!"

\* It was a very touching incident in the last days of the great Dr. Johnson, when he sent for his friend the no less distinguished Sir Joshua Reynolds, and required of him, on the strength of their long years' intimacy, that he would promise that he would never again paint on Sunday!—He was thus urgent on the subject, because he knew that Sabbath breaking was the forerunner of other sins. And certainly, the stroke of the artist's pencil is as *real*, although not so *disturbing* a breach of Sunday, as the noisy blow of the mechanic's hammer, or any other implement of daily toil.

As the low, flat lands of Holland are protected from the dangerous encroachments of the sea, by the dykes, built at so much cost, so God's holy day of rest is HIS wall of defence around those nations which obey HIS laws;—rolling back the terrible floods of wickedness, and saving the inhabitants from irretrievable ruin. What man in his senses would venture to

join, hand in hand, with those ungodly people, who by undermining this means of defence, which the goodness of God has provided, would expose us to the wrathful indignation of the MOST HIGH?

Who will either by word or deed, manifest a restlessness under the wholesome restraints of the LORD'S day, or even wish in his heart that *the Sabbath was past, that he might sell wheat, or go on with any other avocation of life?*

But a due observance of Sunday accomplishes something more than repair the exhausted energies of man and beast, and save us from being drawn into other sins. *We all need stated times, when we can devote ourselves more unreservedly to the great work of preparing for death, and the final judgment.* One day in seven, the ALMIGHTY RULER of the UNIVERSE commands the wheels of business to stand still, that those so constantly engrossed with the cares of *this* life, may turn their thoughts towards a better. A holy quiet succeeds the noise and bustle of other days; the doors of GOD'S HOUSE are thrown open; the bell summons old and young to come up at the appointed hour of prayer;—the ministers of the Lord are there to lead them in their devotions; to proclaim His message of salvation; and to administer His sacraments of grace. “How vast a majority of all the saved will date their first religious impressions from some Lord's Day, and look back through eternity, with adoring gratitude, on its provisions of mercy! How many have been incited to new diligence, comforted under trials, instructed amid perplexities, and “made to sit

in Heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS," on that holy day! St. John had one of his brightest visions of his glorified SAVIOUR when he was in the SPIRIT on the Lord's Day, and we, too, may then expect that Christ will manifest Himself to us as He doth not at any other season. Few are the spiritual blessings of earth, and few the joys of Heaven, that have not a nearer, or remoter connection with the Lord's Day."\*

And yet, there are multitudes in Christian lands, who make light of the appointments of God, and use for their own selfish purposes and enjoyments, the sacred rest set apart by HIM, for the best interests of their souls. They try to escape from the obligation to honor the LORD'S Day, by insisting that it was designed for the Jews alone—although it was kept by our first parents in Eden;—and by Enoch; and by Noah, in the ark; two thousand years ago, almost, before the days of Abraham, from whom the Jews are descended. Its observance is enjoined by one of those Ten Commandments, written on tables of stone, to be the rules of life for GOD'S people, in all ages, and among all nations of the earth. HE promises especial blessings to those who observe it aright. Isaiah lviii. 13-14. And HE utters dreadful threatenings against all such as treat it with neglect. Jeremiah xvii. 22-27.

I trust that what has been said, may have convinced the most careless among you that Sunday should be regarded as a sacred time, and that it ought to be used for the purposes for which God designed it. The very

\* From an admirable tract on "The due observance of the Lord's Day," by the Rev. Wm. H. Lewis, D.D.

name of Sabbath means *rest*. On that day, the CREATOR of all things rested from HIS labor, and we, also, should rest from ours.

But besides the common benefit of the creation, Christians are called upon to commemorate, on this sacred day, the transcendent blessing of redemption, through our adorable SAVIOUR;—our new creation to the hope of everlasting life, of which HIS glorious resurrection, on the first day of the week, was an undoubted pledge and evidence.

The only question to be settled, is *how ought the Lord's day to be kept?*

I need waste no words to prove, that a mere cessation from our worldly employments, will not come up to the demands of God's law. The fourth commandment means something more than reposing on our beds, or strolling through the fields, or visiting our friends and neighbors. Works of necessity and mercy may always be done;—but wherever labor can possibly be spared, it is our duty to do it. Many might be disposed to think that the clergyman who gave positive directions, on his death-bed, that let his summons to depart, come when it might, there should be no grave dug, no coffin made, and no arrangement for his funeral attended to on Sunday, was quite too rigid in his views of the sanctity of the day of rest. But, the truth is, that funerals ought never, except in cases of absolute necessity, take place on the Lord's day. The burial of the dead on Sunday obliges man and beast to labor, when they ought not to do so; it prevents many families from attending public worship



it imposes needless and heavy burdens upon the clergy; in cases where benevolent orders, with badges and bands of music, are called out, it turns Sunday into a gala day; and, in numberless instances, where people go to funerals on the Lord's day, who would not spare the time during the week—it is only fostering the covetous spirit displayed in the text: "*When will the Sabbath be past, that we may sell wheat?*"

Attendance upon public worship is the great duty of Sunday, and one which will be strictly regarded by all who desire GOD's favor.

The early Christians allowed nothing but sickness, imprisonment, banishment, or some great necessity, to keep them from HIS sanctuary. Our zeal should be no less ardent than theirs.

And let it never be supposed that half-day worship is all that is required. Except in case of the sick, of cripples, or the aged, or those living miles from Church, no truly devout person will fancy that he has kept the LORD's day aright, unless he has been present at the morning and evening sacrifice.

The return of Sunday should also remind parents of attending to the religious instruction of their children. Your sending them to Sunday-school does not render it any the less necessary that you should do your duty by them at home.

A portion of this holy time should be spent in reading our Bibles and such religious books as will tend to our spiritual improvement.

These remarks may be trite enough, my friends, but if all observed Sunday as they ought, you may be

sure I should not have taken the trouble to make them. And how stands the case with you? Are you so strict in your manner of keeping this holy-day that you feel no reproach of conscience when thus plainly reminded what the LORD really expects of us? Can you enter into good George Herbert's feelings when he expressed his delight at the return of this season of sacred rest?

"O day most calm, most bright!  
The fruit of this, the next world's bud;  
Th' endorsement of supreme delight,  
Writ by a Friend, and with His blood:  
The couch of time; care's balm and bay;  
The week were dark, but for thy light;  
Thy torch doth show the way."

Not a few persons, claiming to be Christians, neglect the privilege of public worship for causes by no means satisfactory.

A careful mother urges *that she cannot leave her children*. She can trust them with some one else while she goes to the store, or the market, or a place of amusement, and she imagines that their lives will be in danger should she leave them in charge of the same person long enough for her to attend church!

Others neglect public worship *because the weather is threatening*. It might threaten as much as it pleased on other days and it would not have kept them at home. Precautions can readily be found to keep off the bad effects of wet, and damp, and cold, for any purpose during the week, but not on Sunday. On the Lord's day people look out to see if the weather *threatens*: on week-days they look to see if it is *clearing up*!

A third class leave their pews empty, very often, *on account of an alarming disease, called Sunday sickness.* It was never known to kill, and yet it must always be carefully nursed and watched over; and to go to church, under such circumstances, might, perhaps, prove fatal!

There are others, again, who lose the privilege of public worship *under the flimsy plea that they were kept at home by company.* The ALMIGHTY bids us remember that "the stranger within our gates" is to honor HIS day of rest, and if our visitors are unmindful of the obligation to attend church, we shall be doing them a kindness to invite them to go with us.

Again, the neglecters of the Lord's House will excuse themselves *on the ground that their clothes are not good enough for Sunday.* Those who *do* attend service have something better to engage their attention than to notice what apparel their neighbors may have on. Moreover, if you have not clothes suitable for church, consistency should force you to keep away from all other places. People who are tidy in their dress, no matter how poor and plain it may be, will be much more respected than such as appear at church in garments which are beyond their ability to pay for.

Others reply, when expostulated with on the impropriety of staying away from GOD'S HOUSE, *that they can read their Bible at home.* I am glad that they can; but if they studied it very closely they would discover that the Word of God makes it a positive duty to attend Divine Service.

Such are some of the more common excuses under

which those who neglect public worship try to shelter themselves. Need I add one word more, my friends, to convince you how vain all such excuses are? Instead of the complaining language of the text: "*When will the Sabbath be past, that we may sell wheat?*" every devout soul will be ready to say, with David, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." "One day in THY Courts is better than a thousand!"

## SERMON XLVI.

### FAMILY PRAYER.

“As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”—JOSHUA xxiv. 15.

AMONG the life-like characters presented in that wonderful book, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, there is one called *Shame*, who expresses opinions in regard to religion and its observances in perfect harmony with those entertained by many now. He said that “It was a pitiful, low business for a man to mind religion; that a tender conscience was an unmanly thing; and for one to watch over his words and ways, so as to tie up himself from that liberty that the brave spirits of the times accustom themselves unto, would make him a subject of ridicule.” One of the daily duties of the head of every family is to offer prayers and thanksgivings to that gracious FATHER in HEAVEN, who crowns us with so many mercies; and there is no doubt that this pitiful feeling of *Shame* is keeping many well-disposed persons from attending to it.

The noble Joshua, who had led forth the hosts of Israel, conquering and to conquer, was a slave to no such debasing fear. In the face of the assembled multitude, he solemnly declared that, whether others chose to do so or not, he and his family would serve the LORD.

Even during the unsettled and wandering lives of

the Patriarchs this duty was uniformly observed. At every halting-place an altar was set up, and the head of the household, having assembled his children and servants, they reverently and devoutly "called upon the name of the Lord."

The peculiar blessings enjoyed by faithful Abraham were owing, in a great measure, to his diligent discharge of his domestic duties: "I know him" (says the Almighty) "that he will command his children and household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Gen. xviii. 19. David, with the cares of a mighty kingdom pressing upon him, found time to "bless his house" by uniting with them in exercises of devotion. And so, also, in New Testament history. Cornelius, the devout Centurion, prayed with his family, and the frequent mention of the Church in the houses of individual Christians may be fairly referred to as instances where family worship was celebrated.

Although it has been the practice, in all ages, for God's people to observe this plain duty, the number of lukewarm and indifferent believers is so great that it has been estimated that not one-third of the heads of Christian households statedly maintain family devotion!

Without attempting any labored argument to show the propriety and necessity of attending to it, we shall offer some considerations, which may not be in vain.

Social worship is enjoined upon us, because we are social beings, and are bound together by mutual wants and sympathies. The head of every family occupies

a most responsible position, and is furnished with authority and influence, which he is expected to exert for the good of those under his control. He is enabled to form an intimate acquaintance with the character and habits, the wants and weaknesses of all beneath his roof—an acquaintance which no one else can possibly gain. Moreover, this influence begins at the very period when the most lasting impressions are made, and the destinies of his family determined for time and for eternity.

Whatever we wish *others* to practice, we must practice *ourselves*, and nothing is so well calculated to impress the young with a conviction of the importance of prayer as the being called together, morning and evening, to unite in family worship. Christians who neglect this duty will have a great deal to answer for in the day of final account. I have a boyish recollection of the shudder which crept over me on hearing a playmate say of his father, who was a member of the Church, "My father never prays!"

He, no doubt, attended regularly to his *private* devotions, but, from never having seen him thus employed, the child naturally concluded that prayer was altogether neglected by him.

"Hold the little hands in prayer; teach the weak knees their kneeling;

"Let him see thee speaking to thy God; he will not forget it afterwards;

"When old and gray, will he feelingly remember a mother's tender piety, and the touching recollection of her prayers shall arrest the strong man in his sin."—TUPPER'S PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY.

L. there is any thing which has a tendency to remind old and young of their obligations to God, and of their dependence upon HIM, it is their meeting together, morning and evening, as a Christian family, to thank HIM for His favors past, and to beg for a continuance of His goodness. What an incentive to exertion during the day; what a safe-guard against temptation and sin to remember that we have asked the good LORD to "direct us in all our doings," and to keep us from the evil! And when the curtains of night are drawn, and darkness and dangers compass us around, what a privilege to commit ourselves and all that belongs to us to the care of that watchful GUARDIAN, WHO is about our path and about our bed, and Who keepeth those in perfect peace whose minds are stayed on HIM. "If the relative affections have declined during the day, the evening service, like the dew of Heaven, revives and enlivens them. If offences have come, they are easily forgiven when all are asking for pardon for themselves. Every angry word, every wrong temper, every petulant feeling, flies before the hallowing influence of social worship." Twice each day peace is thus proclaimed in every praying household, and the God of peace is present there to bestow HIS blessing.

"Around each pure, domestic shrine  
Bright flowers of Eden bloom and twine;  
Our hearths are altars all;  
The prayers of hungry souls and poor,  
Like armed angels at the door,  
Our unseen foes appal."—*Keble*.

Almost every month there are events occurring in



the family circle—events either joyous or sorrowful—when it would be most grateful to the feelings of all to meet together around the family altar. I refer to such circumstances as the birth or death of a child—the marriage of some member of the household; the sickness of a dear friend; perplexities of business; the absence of father, or mother, or sister, or brother; the safe return from a journey, and other like occasions, when we are reminded of our dependence upon God.

The wise man tells us that “The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; but HE blesseth the habitation of the just.” Prov. iii. 33. Every comfort which you enjoy has been bestowed by HIM. And is it asking too much that you should acknowledge your dependence upon HIM, and teach those beneath your roof to love and obey HIM? Will you refuse to serve that gracious FATHER with a family which He has protected, and fed, and comforted, and signally blessed? Is it at all to be wondered at that the ALMIGHTY should often “pour out HIS fury upon the families that call not upon HIS name?” Do not interest and duty unite in urging upon us to follow the example of holy Job, who said, “I will continually sanctify my family, that God may make a hedge about me and my house, and about all that I have on every side?” People often complain of the undutifulness of their children, and the want of fidelity in their servants; but can they reasonably expect obedience from the one, or any thing better than eye-service from the other when they themselves are remiss in not assembling their households and teaching them from God’s holy

Word that children must honor and obey their parents, and servants their masters?

They are ready to find fault if *their* commands are unheeded and *their* business neglected, while they take no notice of offences against the ALMIGHTY. They look for the effect without the cause, and expect that their children and servants should be dutiful, although irreligious and ungodly. Even the benighted heathens have their household gods. And will Christians venture to be less devout, and less anxious to bring up their families in a wise dependence upon an overruling Providence?

Probably enough has been said to convince you of the *expediency* of celebrating family worship; but I wish to do more. I shall not have accomplished my purpose unless I can persuade every family, not merely to *think* and *talk* about it, and *wish* that circumstances were more favorable for carrying it into effect, but this very hour to *resolve*, as the noble Joshua did: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," and this day carry so good a purpose into effect.

Satan will be ready to suggest difficulties and hindrances; and he will do his best to persuade you, if not to let this advice go for nothing, at least to delay all action upon it for the present. Allow me, therefore, to expose, in few words, the shallowness of his reasonings:

I. The neglecters of family worship will be reminded by him of *the want of time for the purpose*.

The father is obliged to hurry off to his work in the morning, and he comes home weary at night, and this

is often considered a sufficient excuse for allowing his household to grow up without the blessing of family prayer. But when I assure you that the whole exercise, including the reading of a chapter of the Bible, or the Psalter for the day, need not occupy more than fifteen minutes, you will discover how worthless the plea must be. Will any one venture to declare that he cannot afford *this* amount of time for attending to so important a duty as that of training up his family for usefulness on earth, and for eternal bliss in Heaven?

II. "*But who is to conduct this sacred exercise?*" is a puzzling question to some. Perhaps neither father nor mother are communicants; or one may be and the other not. In either case the father, as head of the family, should discharge the office, and this is often done. But should he decline, the mother ought to feel that it is her duty to do it. And many are the instances in which, by thus taking up her cross, "the unbelieving husband" has been "sanctified by the wife." 1 Cor. vii. 14.

It is related of Adam Clarke, that when a mere youth he was greatly distressed that the custom of family worship had become obsolete in his father's house, and, having urged his parents in vain to observe the duty, he began it himself. His extreme bashfulness made it a serious trial, but he dared not shrink from it. He believed that a prayerless house may expect God's *curse*, and he lived long enough to discover that those who thus honor HIM will receive HIS *blessing*.

Permit me to add, that in cases where families are

boarding, and no social worship is celebrated beneath that roof which they are able to attend, the sacred duty should be discharged in their own rooms.

III. Again, people ask, "What prayers can we use?" Turn to those provided for family worship in the Prayer Book and you will find those exactly suited to your wants; and such as the youngest and most ignorant can unite in with the understanding and with the heart. By interweaving with these the collects for the different seasons of the Ecclesiastical year, and prayers for special occasions, all needful variety will be secured.

Singing adds much interest to family worship, and there are few households where it cannot be kept up. Philip Henry used to recommend it very strongly, saying that it was a way of exhibiting godliness, like Rahab's scarlet thread, to such as pass by our windows.

IV. Another excuse for neglecting family worship (and the last I shall notice) is one which few would be willing to give utterance to, but which really is a greater stumbling-block than any other—I mean shame; a fear of exciting surprise among family and friends, and of being thought "righteous overmuch."

But is it right to give way to such apprehensions? Ashamed to follow the example of the Patriarchs of old—of David, when seated on the throne of Israel—of Joshua, a general of unequalled courage and success! Ashamed to do what the greatest and best of all ages have done before you!

The only thing to be ashamed of is that you have neglected this duty so long.

May I not hope that this admonition may be of use to you, and that from this moment the resolution of the noble Joshua will be yours?—*“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!”*

## SERMON XLVII.

### GOD'S EVERLASTING KINGDOM.

"In the days of these Kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and it shall stand forever."—DANIEL ii. 44.

ALL that was foretold in this remarkable prophecy, in due time, came to pass. Four mighty earthly kingdoms arose, flourished, and faded away. The dominion of the Babylonian princes passed into the hands of Cyrus, the Persian; Alexander, the Macedonian, then set up his throne; and when this tottered to its fall, the Roman Empire extended its authority over a large portion of the civilized world. While this last kingdom was crumbling in pieces and following the destiny of those which had gone before, another kingdom was set up on the earth which should never be destroyed. The four temporal kingdoms had served their purpose in preparing the world for a kingdom of heavenly origin, which should live and flourish amidst the revolutions and overthrow of all institutions of man's devising, and which should outlast them all. This is the KINGDOM OF THE MESSIAH, the CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD. For the establishment of this kingdom upon earth, His believing people had been watching and waiting, through long and dreary years. "This want and this expectation CHRIST came to satisfy; for

(423)

He came not merely to awaken a religious sentiment in the minds and hearts of His Disciples, or to declare to them certain doctrines of which before they were ignorant, but to found a kingdom, as He Himself declared from the first; as St. John, the herald of His coming, had declared before him: 'The kingdom of God is at hand;' 'The kingdom of God is among you.' For this term, 'Kingdom of God,' we must not impoverish as though it were merely a convenient abstraction to express the sum total of the religious sentiments, opinions, feelings, actions of His Disciples. But this kingdom, as it is a *kingdom*, points to a visible fellowship, and the embodiment therein of a number of persons, constituting an organic whole, owning a single head. And as it is a kingdom of *God*, it declares God to be its author and founder; it declares itself to be lifted above the caprice of men, neither having been made, nor yet being to be marred by them; which they indeed may deny, but which cannot deny itself, nor by their denial be annulled."\* If the Church be only an *earthly* institution, it may change and perish, and we may disobey its laws, and even break off from it, and forsake it, and no great harm need follow. But if it be a kingdom set up by the GOD of HEAVEN, it may fairly demand our reverence, our love, and our life-long obedience. Now, how does the Bible represent it? As a *kingdom*; a kingdom which shall endure through *all ages*. "In the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and it shall stand for.

\* Trench's Hulsean Lectures, p. 284-5.

ever." "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." St. Matt. xvi. 18.

And well may this kingdom be thus enduring, because the objects of its establishment is most important. "The Lord added to the Church, daily, such as should be saved." Acts ii. 47. This kingdom is that which brings together God's people into one universal brotherhood, on earth, and in which they are to be trained up for blessedness, in Heaven. It is a distinct, separate, and independent empire, with its own peculiar officers, and laws, and privileges; an empire founded by GOD himself. This kingdom is no fond conceit, nor fancy, nor speculation, nor romantic dream; but a great and glorious reality. Moreover, it is not an institution yet to be established, but one which the God of Heaven has *already* set up, and into whose ample bosom untold myriads have through His mercy been gathered.

This *universal and everlasting* KINGDOM is distinguished by *certain infallible marks and evidences*, which prevent it from being confounded with *human* institutions which may resemble it in some respects, and which may have been organized with an honest purpose of doing good. And when the minister of God goes forth upon his high mission and preaches "CHRIST, and HIM crucified," he is not to represent HIM as an isolated Being, Who "has left us individually to find out the system of His doctrines as best we can; but as the ever-living Prophet, and Priest, and King of His Kingdom. He is to preach His divinity, His incarnation, the instructions of His life, the sufferings of His death, His atonement, His resurrection, His ascension



into Heaven, not merely as separate and independent truths, but as the glorious doctrines of His Kingdom, and as the foundations of that throne of mercy and power which God has erected upon earth, and by which, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He is to gather together in one all things in CHRIST. He is to preach the HOLY GHOST, not merely as an invisible influence, or agency, or operation, without which no man can be saved; but as the third Person in the ever blessed Trinity; as the enlightener, the comforter, and sanctifier of the faithful; as always dwelling in His Kingdom to guide her into truth, and as ever present in her ordinances and sacraments to help our infirmities, and to give us the aids of His mighty power. He is to preach the retributions of an eternal world; not as expressive alone of the wrath of an offended God, but as the righteous judgments of the kingdom of Heaven, and as the inevitable consequences of an abuse of the mercies and blessings of that kingdom."\*

I mentioned, just now, that there were *certain marks and evidences* by which this KINGDOM, set up by the GOD of Heaven, might always be recognized, and it is important that I should enumerate them.†

\* From an admirable sermon preached before the Convention of Western New York, in 1847, by the Rev. James A. Bolles, then Rector of St. James' Church, Batavia, and now of Boston.

† As it is quite impossible, within the narrow limits of a sermon, to go into details, the reader is earnestly advised to read, with attention, the following books: "Chapman's Sermons;" Kip's "Double Witness;" Wilson's "Church Identified;" Mines' "Presbyterian Clergyman Looking for the Church;" and Odenheimer on the "Origin of the Prayer Book."

I. The first note of this KINGDOM is its *visibility*. "It shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the LORD's House shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Isaiah ii. 2. "The Stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Daniel ii. 35. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." St. Matt. v. 14. This KINGDOM of GOD upon earth has a visible ministry; visible Scriptures; visible forms, and ceremonies, and observances; visible sacraments; and, for well nigh two thousand years, it has passed safely through all the fluctuations of time, and has been the "Pillar and Ground of the Truth." 1 Tim. iii. 15. It is just as absurd to be talking about an invisible kingdom upon earth as to speak of invisible swords and spears, invisible horses and chariots, or invisible armories and palaces. The very idea of a kingdom implies its *visibility*. Moreover, there is no weight in the argument, that because CHRIST is an *invisible* KING, therefore HIS kingdom must be invisible. Are not earthly monarchs withdrawn, in a great measure, from the public gaze? But do their kingdoms cease to be visible on this account? By no means. And even as temporal sovereigns, dwelling in their palaces, apart from observation and near approach, rule over their subjects by duly appointed agents and officers, so does the KING of KINGS, immortal and invisible, govern HIS visible kingdom, the Church, through the instrumentality of HIS ministering servants.

II. Another mark of the kingdom of God upon earth is its *perpetuity*. It is expressly foretold of it in the text that it should "*never* be destroyed," but that it should "*stand fast forever.*" History shows that this has been the case with no *temporal* kingdom, and the most substantial institutions of man's devising (however good and praiseworthy the purpose to which they are devoted) are exposed to changes and decay.

The ALMIGHTY having solemnly pledged His word that His kingdom, the Church, should last always, even unto the end of the world, *that* kingdom, complete in all its parts, and vigorous and active in its operations, must now be found upon this earth. Yes, my friends, strive as we may to escape from such a conclusion, there *must* and there *does* exist a great and Divine System, having the properties of vast dominion, distinguished privileges, and eternal endurance; united to CHRIST as a bride to her lawful husband; a system easily to be recognized and known; "not dimly and darkly, like the faint outline of a distant shore, but a mighty fabric, with bulwarks, and towers, and palaces, kings serving in its courts, and queens worshipping in its streets; a sight fearful and beautiful to look upon: 'fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners.' " \*

III. A third note of God's KINGDOM, the Church, is its *unity*. Instead of blessing God, as some thoughtless people do, because there is such a numberless variety

\* Marshall's Notes on Episcopacy, p. 27-8. A capital book. Edited by Bishop Wainwright.

of sects, that every man's fancy may be gratified in choosing one to suit himself, St. Paul charges Christians to "Mark them which cause divisions" in the Church, and to "avoid them." Romans xvi. 17. "*One Faith, one Lord, one Baptism*" is inscribed in letters of light upon the standard of the Cross, under which the hosts of God are to go forth to evangelize the world. Ephes. iv. 5. "Contend earnestly for the Faith which was once (for all) delivered unto the Saints," is the exhortation of St. Jude (v. 3). No change, no improvement in this old Faith is either necessary or possible. The practice of all Christian people, in every age, should be that of the early believers, who "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship," and in the meek reception of the Lord's Supper, and united and heart-felt use of the appointed prayers. Acts ii. 42. So great and terrible is the sin of departing from "the old paths" of the Church, that for ages and generations the earnest supplication has gone up to Heaven: "From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism, Good Lord deliver us!" Nothing hinders the advancement of the Gospel half so much as the want of unity among the followers of JESUS. Schism is a "work of the Devil." *Unity* is a distinguishing mark of God's Kingdom, and good men should never cease to pray that "all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the Faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life."

IV. Another mark of God's Kingdom is *sanctity*. The DIVINE HEAD and FOUNDER of the Church gave

Himself for His people that He might "redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus ii. 14. HE "called us with a holy calling." 2 Tim. i. 9. HIS will is "our sanctification." 1 Thess. iv. 3. It is not pretended that every individual member of the Church is holy, since our Blessed LORD has told us that HIS KINGDOM upon earth is like "a field," in which both "wheat" and "tares," the good and the bad, grow together until the final harvest, at the end of the world. St. Matt. xiii. 24, 30, 43. *Sanctity*, as a mark of this kingdom, implies the sanctity of its HEAD; the holiness of its doctrines; the means of grace afforded in the sacraments; and the evidences of a true and living faith as manifested in the great body of believers. The KINGDOM of GOD is not in words only, but in power; "not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the HOLY GHOST." Romans xiv. 17.

V. A fifth note of the everlasting KINGDOM which the GOD of Heaven established upon earth is *Apostolicity*. In other words, it must have a history, and be able to trace back its origin to the days of the APOSTLES of CHRIST. If there has ever been one moment of time, since its first organization at Jerusalem, that the Christian Church has ceased to exist upon earth, as a visible and well organized KINGDOM, the solemn promise of the LORD JESUS has not been kept. Moreover, any denomination which has been formed by an earthly founder cannot be *the* CHURCH. The man who made it may have been good, and his intentions pure, and the society which he brought together may have ren-

dered some service towards making people better ; but all this will not constitute a Church. No mortal can lay the foundation of the KINGDOM referred to in our text. The great GOD has done that, once for all. Neither is wonderful success in making proselytes any evidence, in itself, that an organization is the Church. If this were the case, could not Mahometanism claim the title? Could we even venture to deny it to the Mormons?

Notwithstanding the plain language used throughout the Bible in regard to GOD'S KINGDOM, and the marks which distinguish it from all human institutions, the most absurd and dangerous notions are entertained on the subject, and that, too, by people who ought to know better. A faithful, devoted clergyman will say to the father of a family, who is about to remove his wife and children to a region destitute of religious privileges, "What a pity that you will not be able to attend church!" "Oh, no," he will be very likely to answer, "there are several churches in the neighborhood." And then the well-meaning father will name over various religious bodies, made by men, which are no more the KINGDOM of GOD upon the earth than the persons who hold office in them are kings or emperors! Again, you hear your friends speak of belonging to the Church, and you inquire, "*What* one?" as if the LORD had ever made more than one.

Unpopular as it may be to express such an opinion, it is, nevertheless, true that one religious body is not just as good as another. Take, if you please, a sincere and honest Quaker, in some respects a beautiful and

lovely character. He believes in no Sacraments, although our BLESSED LORD appointed them as most important means of grace. Can you say that the man who rejects and scorns these institutions of the LORD is as well off as the one who receives them? No, my friends, the person who lives in error is not as safe as his neighbor who holds fast to God's truth. Admit the absurd position that all sincere people are safe, and you must allow that it is needless to preach the Gospel to the heathen! Truth cannot have a hundred forms. GOD has set up but one KINGDOM upon earth, and it is the duty of all to inquire where THAT kingdom is, and avail themselves of its privileges.

Surely we have not been uttering vain and unimportant words in this sermon, while we have, in our poor way, been fulfilling, in some degree, the prophetic declaration of the Psalmist: "They shall speak of the glory of THY kingdom, and talk of THY power; that THY power, THY glory, and the mightiness of THY kingdom might be known unto men."

## SERMON XLVIII.

### OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY.

“How shall they preach, except they be sent?”—ROMANS X.  
15.

AS FAR back as the records of history reach, there has always been an order of men in the world whose business it has been to instruct their fellow-creatures in regard to their religious duties. Where did this class of men come from? and who authorized them to do this work? The wicked world would never have quietly submitted to a set of self-appointed teachers, who went about telling other people of their faults, and threatened them with the terrible judgments of the Almighty unless they repented and turned to God. Some one having authority must, therefore, have clothed these agents with power; and the most careless reader of the Bible will discover that such authority comes from the DIVINE HEAD of the Church. In short, the clergy are *officers* in this KINGDOM of GOD. Now, there must needs be some regular mode of appointing them. How would it answer in an earthly government if every one who believed himself to be qualified, intellectually and morally, for an office was allowed to seize upon it? Would not law and order be driven from the land? There are hundreds of men in the country who write better hands and who are more accurate in figures than



our county clerks, and yet none can be clerks except those who are duly appointed. We can think of many of our acquaintances who have sounder judgments than some who occupy the bench; and still they can never set up a claim to be judges, unless they have received the office in the legal way. And, again, not half the members sent to Congress are as trustworthy or eloquent as thousands of their constituents who remain at home. But who would venture to push himself into the halls of legislation (no matter how rare his mental and moral qualities might be) without having been previously elected by the suffrages of the people? Our ambassadors to foreign countries are not always the greatest proficient in the language of those countries; but it would be deemed a high-handed measure for any one, who could not exhibit the proper credentials, to appear as our representatives at the Court of France or Spain because he was master of the French or Spanish tongue.

If, then, the appointment to offices in worldly governments be hedged about with proper and indispensable restraints, shall the KINGDOM of God be left in a state of anarchy? Plainly not. Hence the Apostle's explicit declaration, that "No man taketh [or *can* take] this honor unto himse'f but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Heb. v. 4 Our adorable SAVIOUR, whenever He speaks of Himself as coming on His glorious embassy from Heaven to the dwellers upon earth, brings out the fact that He was sent by the Eternal FATHER. St. John viii. 42, etc. The absolute need of ecclesiastical mission, by a power fully authorized to send, is thus distinctly implied and enforced. St. Paul

refers to the same point in our text: "*How shall they preach, except they be sent?*" And when JESUS commissioned His Apostles at the first, it was in these terms of lofty import: "As MY FATHER hath sent ME, even so send I you." St. John xx. 21. And to show them that there was to be *a succession* in this ministry our blessed LORD declares, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

There may be hundreds of men who have more learning, and eloquence, and even godliness than the duly commissioned ambassador of CHRIST; but if they have not been *sent* by HIM, and cannot exhibit the commission under which they claim to act, they are not His ministers. Suppose that on some Sunday, when a congregation of Christian people had met for public worship, the sexton should come in and inform them that the clergyman was sick and could not discharge his accustomed duties, would the wisest or holiest man present feel justified in putting on the ministerial robes, and proceeding to preach, and baptize, and administer the Lord's Supper? Certainly not. But granting that so rash an individual could be found, and that he should leave his pew and ascend to the pulpit, would this assumption of an office, to which he had not been duly called, according to the rules of the Church, make him a minister any more than the person who sat in the next seat, but who was not quite so bold and presuming? And if the self-appointed preacher happened to be pleased with his new position, and continued to hold it, would he be a whit more an ambassador of CHRIST at the end of ten years than he

was on that first Sunday? And if twenty thousand men, in various parts of the world, should undertake the same holy work, in the same irregular way, would the lapse of time, or the fact that congregations met and listened to them, and treated them as ministers, invest them with Divine authority? St. Paul answers these questions, very emphatically, when he asks, "*How shall they preach, except they be sent?*"

The necessity of a regular, unchanging mode of investing men with authority to minister in holy things appears from the single consideration that people may feel confident that they are really listening to a messenger of the MOST HIGH, and that the person who baptizes their children, and who administers the holy eucharist has power from God to do these sacred things.

As a question of fact, then, it may well be asked, has the LORD been accustomed to send forth His ministering servants in any particular way? We all know how it was in the Jewish Church. There were three distinct orders of the ministry, and these officers were appointed according to a certain, unvarying rule. The Apostle tells us (Heb. x. 1) that the law was a shadow, or type, of the Gospel, and it might reasonably be supposed that some such arrangement would be continued under the Christian dispensation. And how was it? "It is evident unto all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in CHRIST'S Church: Bishops, Priests and Deacons." Such is the solemn and emphatic language of the Church. And now, if the question be asked, why do not all

well meaning people recognize these three orders in the ministry? we do not hesitate to reply: because they have *not* diligently, and with unprejudiced minds, studied the authorities here referred to. Thousands are satisfied to drop the whole question, as William Jay, the independent minister of Bath, says he did, by taking it for granted that the question, as to the mode of ordination, was one of no vital importance.

A short sermon furnishes no sufficient space for arraying the conclusive arguments, which can be produced from Holy Scripture and ancient authors, in favor of this ministry in three orders, and we can hope to do little more than to direct the attention of the inquiring towards such authorities as every one has within his reach.

We remark, then, in few words, that as there were three orders of ministers in the Jewish Church, so the same distinction of three orders continued while our Saviour remained upon earth. HE was the Great High Priest, after the order of Melchizedec (Heb. v. 10); then there were the Twelve Apostles (St. Mark iii. 14, 15) for the *second* order; and the Seventy (St. Luke x. 1) for the *third*.

JESUS continued with the Apostles for forty days, after His resurrection, giving them particular directions concerning the management of His Kingdom, which was soon to devolve upon them (Acts i. 2-3); and then, just before ascending to His throne on high, He renewed His solemn commission to them to go forth into all lands, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and administering the holy Sacraments; and teach-

ing the converts to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded. St. Matt. xxviii. 18-20. But did these three orders of the ministry continue in the Church after our Lord's ascension? There is the fullest proof of it. First, there were the *Apostles* (Acts xv. 6); next, *Elders* (sometimes then called *Bishops*), as having oversight of particular congregations (Acts xv. 6); and, thirdly, *Deacons* (Acts vi. 6; and 1 Tim. iii. 12-13.) And what was the distinction between these three orders of ministers?

The *Apostles*, or highest order, had power to ordain Priests and Deacons (Acts vi. 5-6; 2 Tim i. 6; 1 Tim. v. 22; 2 Tim. ii. 2, etc.); and they alone could administer the rite of laying on of hands, or confirmation. Acts viii. 14-17; and Heb. vi. 2.

The *Elders*, or second grade of the ministry, could preach and baptize. Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 2; and 1 Peter v. 2.

*Deacons*, who constituted the third and lowest rank of the apostolic ministry, while their special work was to aid the Elders (Priests, or Presbyters) in caring for the poor, were also authorized to preach and baptize. Acts viii. 5, 36-40, and xxi. 8.

The testimony of the early Fathers proves that these three orders of the ministry were continued in the Church, everywhere, after the death of the Apostles. It is vain for an objector to refuse this evidence and say, "We care not what the early Fathers testify!"

When this objector would prove to an infidel that the books of the Holy Scripture, as we have them now, were received by the Church in the first ages of Chris

tianity, he must quote these very Fathers. If he wished to argue such questions as the propriety of infant baptism, or the institution of the Christian Sabbath, or the fact that the first Christians held the doctrine of the Trinity, he would refer to the early Fathers as the best authority which could be desired. Why, then, are the early Fathers such unreliable witnesses when they speak concerning the organization of the Church and the three orders of the ministry?

Theodoret (one of these ancient authors) informs us that after the death of the first Apostles, the highest order of ministers were called *Bishops*, the name of Apostles being deemed most appropriate for those who had been more directly sent forth by our blessed LORD.

The ecclesiastical historian Eusebuis, gives a list of the Bishops, in various cities, from the Apostles down to the year 305.

There is the fullest evidence that in every age, and in every country, one Bishop presided over his own diocese; ordained Priests and Deacons, and administered confirmation. Indeed, there is not the slightest trace of any other practice or condition of affairs, and every canon of the ancient councils implies the same thing.

Joseph Wolff, the distinguished traveller, who was converted to Christianity, and became a devoted herald of the Cross, tells the following significant story: "This question, '*What Bishop sent you out?*' was addressed to me by the great Bogar, late Patriarch of the Armenian nation, at Constantinople; the great Hernes, Archbishop of the Armenian nation at Tiflis; and by

the whole body of Bishops at Ptsh Miazin, the celebrated convent at the foot of Mount Ararat; by the Syrian Patriarch in Mesopotamia; by the Coptic Bishops; by the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople; and by the Roman Catholic Bishops of Bagdad. When I replied to them, '*My internal voice sent me forth,*' the answer I received was, 'Moses heard the voice of God upon Horeb, but God deemed it necessary to endow him with the gift of miracles (Exodus viii.) in order that Pharaoh may be forced to acknowledge him as the *Extraordinary Ambassador*; and the ordinary ministers of God, the Levites, had to receive their commission from Moses; and CHRIST made the same provision in His Church. He imparted the gift of miracles to the Apostles in sending them forth; but they instituted Bishops by the imposition of hands, and charged them to follow up that manner of constituting ministers. Titus i. 5. If you, Joseph Wolff, are an extraordinary minister, prove it by miracles; if an ordinary one, who laid hands on you? Your internal voice is evidence to you, not to us.' "

He adds, "the very fact that all the Eastern churches, without one single exception, have Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, is to me a sufficient proof that Episcopacy is of Divine origin, and that the doctrine of Apostolic succession is a Scriptural doctrine."

As no one denies that *Elders*, or *Presbyters*, are an order of the ministry, and have been since the times of the Apostles, no time need be spent on this point.

But, in regard to the ministerial character and standing of DEACONS, a few additional remarks will not be

amiss. Some denominations, of modern growth, have an officer whom they call a *Deacon*, whose business is to make the Sunday collections, see that the preacher's salary is paid, and other duties of this kind. Now, what significance or meaning would St. Paul's language have when applied to such an officer? "They that have used the office of a Deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith, which is in CHRIST JESUS." 1 Tim. iii. 13. Is it not clear from this that the Church is right in considering the Deacon as one of the orders of the ministry, and not a mere layman; and that the "good degree" which he is to purchase for himself by faithfulness in this lower grade is that of the Priesthood? Some have attempted to explain away this difficulty by saying that those who proved to be good and *efficient deacons* were afterwards made *preachers*! In other words, that when the merchants, and mechanics, and bank officers, and constables, and steamboat captains, and toll-gate keepers have shown all due fidelity in watching the sexton, and in collecting the preacher's salary, they shall all be made preachers for their pains!

If the office of a Deacon be merely a secular one, why were the highest *spiritual* qualifications required in those who were appointed to it? Why need they be "men full of the HOLY GHOST and of wisdom?" Acts vi. 3-10. Moreover, upon observing the conduct of the early DEACONS, we see them performing the duties of clergymen. St. Stephen was no sooner ordained than we are told that, "full of faith and power, he did great wonders and miracles among the people,"



and it is fair to presume that he *preached*, because his enemies, having in vain tried to silence him in debate, "suborned men, which said, we have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." Of St. Philip, another DEACON, we read that he *preached* and *baptized*. Acts viii. 12, 13, 38-40.

That this order of the ministry was continued is evident, because St. Paul, in writing to the Philippians, mentions their DEACONS (i. 1), and in his first Epistle to St. Timothy, the Bishop of Ephesus, he gives careful directions about the choice of DEACONS (1 Tim. iii. 8), which he would hardly have done had Deacons been only laymen, appointed to collect money, and to see that the churches were well swept!

The early Fathers all speak of DEACONS as an order of the ministry, and every ancient branch of the Church has always regarded them as such. A little incident during the visit of Mār Yohannah, the Nestorian Bishop, to this country, is full of weighty meaning. A gentleman, who filled the secular office of deacon in his own denomination, had shown much kindness to the Eastern stranger, and, some time after, when the Bishop wrote him a letter of thanks, he directed it to the lawyer as to a *reverend clergyman*! The venerable prelate had never heard of a DEACON who did not belong to the sacred ministry.

The question which the Apostle asks in the text, is a very grave and important one: "*How shall they preach, except they be sent?*" Those who retain the Apostolic ministry, in its three orders, are holding fast to a Divine appointment, and one which has always

and everywhere been recognized and preserved. The powers of the Church have been carefully handed down, and she can prove her title to exercise them. Before a man feels certain that he owns the house he lives in, he scrutinizes the title-deed; aye, he makes sure that the title-deeds of those who held the property before him were all that they professed to be. And so, when the ALMIGHTY purchased the CHURCH with the precious blood of His dear Son, He left no uncertainty about the title-deed. The DIVINE REDEEMER did not ascend from earth until he had said to the Apostles, and to their successors in all coming times: "*As My Father sent Me, even so send I you.*" The pastors of His flock can all exhibit the broad commission which they have received from Him. Isaiah's striking language is fulfilled in them: "Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers; and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." xxx. 20, 21. The ministry is one of God's great gifts to the world, and it should be prized accordingly.

People are particular enough not to entrust the care of their bodies to an unskilful physician, or the management of their property to an ignorant lawyer, and yet how few, in these days, stop to ask, "Is our spiritual guide one whom the LORD has sent?"

"We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." 1 Thess. v. 12. And, as those

who are commissioned by God to watch for your souls are subject to human infirmities, daily offer up for them your earnest prayers, that they may be faithful shepherds of the flock; and that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified.

## SERMON XLIX

### REASONS WHY ALL CHRISTIAN PEOPLE SHOULD BE CONFIRMED.

"I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."—ROMANS i. 11.

SUCH was the anxious wish of the Apostle Paul concerning those at Rome, whose hearts were turned from the darkness of Paganism towards the glorious light of the Gospel. It was not of *miraculous* gifts that he spoke, but of the *ordinary* graces of the SPIRIT conferred upon the penitent and believing by the laying on of the hands of God's appointed minister. The effect of such an office was the *establishment*, or *confirming*, of Christians in the faith. St. Paul speaks of this again, when writing to the Corinthians: "The testimony of Christ was *confirmed* in you, so that ye come behind in no gift." 1 Cor. i. 6. Ever since the days of the Apostles a solemn rite has been practised, in all the branches of the Christian Church, by which these ordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit are bestowed, and, on account of the purpose which it serves, called *confirmation*. As one of the successors of the Apostles is so soon to visit this parish, "longing," as St. Paul did, "to impart some spiritual gift," that all those of our people who would enter upon a new and better life "may be established," it is proper that I should ex-

plain the nature and obligations of this ordinance to day. To show what great importance we attach to Confirmation, I would state, at the outset, that we believe it to be the bounden duty of all who "profess and call themselves Christians" to receive it, and that those who neglect it have not done all that they *can* and *ought* to do in order to secure God's favor. And now for the reasons which prompt us to this belief:

I. And, first, I remark that Confirmation is proper and necessary, *because it is in strict accordance with the teachings of the Holy Scripture.*

In the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle mentions certain *first* "*principles* of the doctrine of Christ," by attending to which the souls of God's people are to be prepared, during this season of probation, for those great events, the "resurrection of the dead" and "eternal judgment." And what *are* these first "*principles*" according to the Apostle's catalogue? He answers for himself: 1—Repentance; 2—Faith; 3—Baptism; and 4—Laying on of hands, or confirmation. It cannot be said that he was referring to the *clergy* only, for the name which he gives to these things, "*principles* of the doctrine of Christ," show that the Apostle was speaking of something which all people should have regard to, in order that they might be ready for the general resurrection and the judgment. And who denies that all must have the *first* of these principles in order to be saved—viz., *repentance*? Who ventures to declare the *second* as unimportant—viz., *faith*? And what infatuated being makes light of the *third*, which is *baptism*? Then, I ask, if the

Apostle's catalogue of first "principles" be strictly followed thus far, what power or authority has released us from attending to the next item in the list: *laying on of hands*, or confirmation?

Now let us look into the Book of the Acts of the Apostles and see whether the early Christians observed these *four* "principles," or whether they did as some venture to do in these days—practice those things which suit them, and neglect the rest. In the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we are told that St. Philip, who was a deacon (the lowest order in the ministry of the Church), went to Samaria, and preached with so much zeal that a goodly number of men and women received baptism at his hands. And thus these people had attended to three of the first "principles" in the Apostle's catalogue—viz., repentance, faith, and baptism. Did they give heed, also, to the fourth, *to laying on of hands, or confirmation*? Yes. Word was sent, at once, to the Apostles at Jerusalem, that St. Philip, the deacon, having preached and baptized (which is all that a clergyman in the lower order of the ministry can do), the new Christians waited for the coming of the highest order of ministers in the Church, to whom alone belonged the power of conferring *confirmation*, or *laying on of hands*, the fourth of those first "*principles*" of the Gospel to be by all observed. And then the Apostles, Peter and John, "*longing*," as their brother Paul had done, when he wrote our text, "to impart some spiritual gift" to those lately baptized, "to the end they might be *established*" in the good thing so well begun, hastened to Samaria and administered

that holy rite, which is so soon to be repeated in this place.

Again, turn to the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Acts. St. Paul, in one of his missionary journeys, reaches Ephesus. Among those who flocked to hear him preach were certain persons who had received the "baptism of repentance," as administered by our Saviour's forerunner, St. John. The Apostle told them that this was not *Christian* baptism, for St. John the Baptist was a Jew, and that *now*, since the old dispensation had passed away, it was needful for them to be baptized in the name of CHRIST. They saw the force of what he said, and did as he advised. And then, having had regard to *three* of the "principles" of the Gospel, they gladly submitted to the *fourth*, and received "laying on of hands," or confirmation. Acts xix. 6. Years afterwards St. Paul, in a letter to these Christians at Ephesus, reminds them of this, saying, "In whom, also, after that ye believed, ye were *sealed* with that HOLY SPIRIT of promise." Ephes. i. 13.

II. Again, I insist that confirmation is obligatory on all persons who seek to be united to Christ, *because of the concurrent testimony of the early fathers on the subject.*

Thus, Tertullian, who lived within eighty years after the Apostle John, remarks, "After baptism, then the laying on of hands, with benediction, invoking and calling upon the Holy Spirit." De Baptismo, c. 7, 8. Fifty years later, St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, traces back confirmation to the Apostles, and referring to the case of the Samaritans, of which we have just

spoken, he says, "This is still the custom among us: they who are baptized in the Church are presented to the presiding officers of the Church, that by our prayers, and the laying on of hands, they may receive the Holy Ghost, and be perfected with the Seal of the Lord." Ep. lxxiii. Ad Jubaian, etc.

Not to multiply these references, which would fill whole pages, I shall content myself with quoting St. Jerome. "This is the custom of the Churches (he says), in the case of such as are baptized afar off in the lesser towns by the Priests and Deacons: the Bishop travels out to them, to lay hands upon them for the invoking of the Holy Spirit." Again, he says, "Dost thou ask where this is written? In the Acts of the Apostles. But if there were no authority of Scripture to be alleged for it, the consent of the whole world to this point might well challenge the force of a precept." And this remark of St. Jerome naturally leads to my next, and

III position—which is, that confirmation must be right, *because the whole Christian world has practised it.*

It is a well established fact, that it was "the uniform custom of the Church of Christ for the first 1500 years, and is now continued, with some variety in the manner of administering it, by more than *nineteen-twentieths* of the Christian world. This, alone would present to many minds an unanswerable argument in favor of its authority and utility." (Testimony to confirmation by Non-Episcopal writers, arranged by the Rev. B. W. Morris, p. 11.) Want of time to enlarge upon this head obliges me to pass on to the



IV. That Confirmation must be most important, *because the Church lays such stress upon it.* At the Baptism of every child, she says, in effect, to the parents and sponsors, "You must take this little one, whom God has thus adopted, and train it up for HIM. Do not wait for the seeds of evil to fasten themselves in the soil, but begin this training *now*. Teach this child to pray; instruct it in the catechism; take it to Church; and, at the proper age (that of opening youth), and before it leaves the shelter of your roof to go forth into the wicked world, present it to the Bishop to be confirmed." Beautiful and beneficent arrangement of the holy Church. She carries out, most faithfully, the will of her Heavenly Bridegroom, that she may bring many sons unto glory. The good God "does not cause us to be born again of water and of the Spirit (at our Baptism), and then to live as we can; His reservoir of grace is not exhausted by that one great and glorious gift. He does not tire of those whom He has once chosen, nor does His love grow cold. He does not take us across the Red Sea of Baptism, and leave us to perish in the wilderness. Nay, He has fresh channels of grace. He is ready to confirm and set His seal to His first act; to abide by His word pledged in Baptism; to put His hand to His former deed. He lays His hands upon us by those who are in CHRIST's stead, by those who are well called our 'Fathers in God.' And thus, in Confirmation, our spiritual life receives fresh strength; our Father's blessing rests upon us; His SPIRIT comes to us with

new gifts, to stablish and to settle his former ones" Tracts for Christian Seasons, vol. ii. p. 327-9.

V. Again, I remark that *Confirmation must be an ordinance, which has the fullest warrant of Holy Scripture, because good and learned men of all denominations have acknowledged it.* Thus, John Calvin, the father of the *Presbyterian* system remarks, that "It was an ancient custom in the Church, for the children of Christians, after they were come to years of discretion, to be presented to the Bishop, in order to fulfil the duty which was required of persons who were baptized at adult age." He adds, that the "Laying on of hands," by the Bishop, in solemn benediction, which followed the careful instruction of these young persons, he "highly approved" of. Inst. b. iv. c. 19.

A committee of the *Presbyterian General Assembly*, in this country, appointed to draw up a plan for the better instruction and discipline of baptized children, mention in their report that the "rite of confirmation" was, in the early days of the Church, "administered to baptized children, when arrived to competent years, and previously instructed and prepared for it," showing clearly, as these *Presbyterian* ministers justly observe, "that the *Primitive Church*, in her purest days, exercised the authority of a mother over her baptized children." (Report made in 1812.)

A prominent *Congregational* preacher remarks, in an able sermon; that "The confession of the name of Christ is, after all, very lame, and will be so, till the discipline which Christ ordained be restored, and the rite of Confirmation be recovered to its full use and

solemnity." (Dr. Coleman, of Brattle Street Church, Boston).

The *Baptist* Association, which met in Philadelphia in 1742, adopted this sensible "article." "We believe that 'Laying on of Hands,' with prayer, upon baptized believers, as such, is an ordinance of Christ, and ought to be submitted unto by all such persons that are admitted to partake of the Lord's Supper, and that the end of this ordinance is not for the *extraordinary* gifts of the Spirit, but for a further reception of the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephes. i. 13-14), or for the addition of the graces of the Spirit, and the influences thereof; to confirm, strengthen, and comfort them in Christ Jesus."

Adam Clarke, the *Methodist*, mentions in his autobiography, that so high was his estimate of Confirmation, that years after he became a Methodist preacher, he went up to receive the *Laying on of hands*, from the Bishop of Bristol, and that several of the Methodist preachers' sons went with him, for the same purpose.

Dr. Bangs, a distinguished *Methodist*, in this country, observes, "I consider Baptism but half performed, unless the application of water to the body is followed by the laying on of hands and prayer, that the blessing of the Holy Spirit may descend upon the subjects of this holy ordinance."

I have now presented *five* good and sufficient reasons, why *all* persons, who desire to come unto God, in the ways of His appointment, should avail themselves of the blessing of Confirmation. Our Lord

and Master submitted to Baptism, not because He needed it, but to leave us an example, to receive, with humility and faith, all the ordinances of Divine appointment.

Do you answer, that you have now been a professing Christian for years, and that you are too *old* to come? Never too old, my friends, to do right. Bishop Meade relates, in his history of the "Old Families of Virginia" (ii. p. 92), that the venerable mother of President Madison, who had been a communicant since her twentieth year, presented herself for confirmation, "at the age of four score and four."

Do you object that you are *too young*? Ah, my hearers, are you too young *to die*? You can call to mind, many, no older than yourselves, whom Death has snatched away. *Who* has given you any assurance to expect that the Confirmation-season *next year* shall find *you* among the living? And let old and young remember, by way of encouragement, that it is not as those who have gifts to offer unto God, that He invites you to approach His Altar, but that *He*, the giver of all good, may bestow gifts on *you*. You would not insult an *earthly* monarch, by presuming to *decline* a *proffered* favor. How, then, can you venture to turn away thus thankless from your God?

## SERMON L.

### INFANT BAPTISM.

“She was baptized, and her household.”—Acts xvi. 15.

WHAT a beautiful and beneficent custom—that of baptizing infants! It brings tears of joy into many eyes, when the group of parents and sponsors approach the font, and present the helpless innocents to the minister of God, that they may be engrafted into the body of CHRIST.

“Gladly we bring them, LORD,  
Devoting them to THEE,  
Imploring that, as we are THINE,  
THINE may our offspring be.”

Although from the earliest days of the Christian Church, INFANT BAPTISM has been practised in all countries, there are some in these latter times who deny its Scriptural authority, and make light of its importance. We know the effect which education and habit, and prejudice, have upon the mind, and are prepared to argue with such objectors without the least unkind feeling, because we believe them to be sincere.

At first sight, their position seems to be a strong one, when they boldly say, as if there could be no possible answer to the question, “Where is there any command in the Bible for the baptism of Infants?”

Show us the '*Thus saith the Lord*' for it, and we will believe."

In reply to this point, it is only necessary to remind them, that Christians consider many things as most important for their spiritual well-being, and some are of the very highest consequence, for the support of which no such authority can be claimed. Where is it written in the Bible, "Thus saith the Lord, Christians must observe, as holy time, the day of the SAVIOUR'S resurrection, instead of the Jewish Sabbath?" or, "Thus saith the Lord, women must receive the Communion?" or, "Thus saith the Lord, Christian people must have family prayer, and establish Sunday Schools, and support Missionary Societies?"

Will any one deny that these are good and necessary things? and yet, where is the *command* in the HOLY SCRIPTURES for either of them? And so this most plausible of all the objections against Infant Baptism comes to naught.

And while thus clearing the ground, before going on to show what reasons may be presented for this ancient and universal custom of the Church, I shall mention another popular objection. It is urged that no one ought to be baptized, who does not believe, and that as infants are incapable of believing, so also they are improper subjects of baptism. This opinion is drawn from our SAVIOUR'S words, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." St. Mark xvi. 16.

The unfairness of such a conclusion from this verse may be shown in various ways. Take the Apostle's

injunction, "If any will not work, neither shall he eat." 2 Thess. iii. 10.

Does St. Paul mean to extend this wholesome rule to infants, or the sick or the aged, who are unable to work? Plainly not. He is only speaking of those who are capable of working. And so, too, our SAVIOUR'S language in regard to the subjects of baptism should be applied to none but those who can exercise faith, and who enjoy the privilege of being taught their duty. The case of infants is in no way connected with this passage.

Again, if this verse proves that infants ought not to be *baptized*, it proves also that they cannot be *saved*. Three things are spoken of, as you observe, viz., believing, baptizing, and being saved. If the *second* ought not to take place before the *first*, neither should the *third* take place before the *first*. See, then, how the argument stands. No one can be saved who does not believe. Infants do not believe; therefore they cannot be saved.

What Christian is prepared to admit this?

I need hardly say that the plain and undoubted sense of the passage repels so monstrous a conclusion.

Our blessed LORD was announcing that the door of entrance to HIS Kingdom was now thrown open to all who chose to come in; and He sets forth *belief* and *baptism* as two distinct conditions of salvation. Adults, who are capable of belief, are expected to bring this qualification; but it is not looked for in infants, who cannot exercise faith. Baptism is a solemn form of adoption into God's family—the Church; and an out-

ward token of our being engrafted into CHRIST, the true vine. For such adoption, children are the most fit and proper subjects.

“The universal law of God and man has made the condition of children dependent on the faith of their parents. It is so in nature and in society. The character and position of the parent determines, to a large extent, the condition and destiny of the child. The parent fixes the family and national relations of the child. God had consecrated this principle, as the normal one in the kingdom of grace, under two previous dispensations. For He ordained, that the outward seal of the parent's faith should be affixed to his child. We are to regard our children as heirs with us, of a common salvation, and surely they are entitled, as well as we, to the outward sign, seal, and token, so graciously appointed by our FATHER, of that great and precious salvation.”\*

So much for the popular objections *against* the practice of Infant Baptism. Let us see, now, what can be said for it.

I. And, first, we claim that it is right and proper to baptize infants, because *they are naturally included in the broad commission which our blessed LORD gave to His Apostles*. “Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.” St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

Suppose the proper authorities in this country

\* Dr. Craik's able tract on Baptism, pt. ii. pp. 15, 16.



should issue a command, to-day, that a census be made of the people of the land; who would be included in it? Would it merely embrace the *adults*, or would it give an account of the number of *children* also? Certainly the children would be reckoned as no unimportant part of the nation.

And so, when our Saviour sends forth His ministering servants to go through all lands, and bring the people into covenant with their Creator and Redeemer, the most natural construction of the commission makes it include both old and young. Age and sex, and rank, or any other circumstance which does not stain the soul with actual sin, can place no obstruction in the way of one's receiving the mercies of God. We claim the right to baptize infants because they have immortal souls which CHRIST JESUS died to save. "To expect that in promulgating His covenant, He would make mention of infancy or adult years—would speak of the baptism of boys, or girls, or virgins, or married men, or married women, or widows—this would be an absurdity. The physical and the personal has nothing at all to do with the spiritual covenant."\*

II. Another reason for supposing that our Blessed LORD regards with favor the bringing of little children into covenant with HIM is *the fact that he showed such kindness towards them during His sojourn upon earth.*

"They brought young children to CHRIST that He should touch them (put His hands on them, and

\* Adam's "Mercy to Babes," p. 37—a little book which deserves to be much better known than it is.

pray), and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when JESUS saw it, He was much displeased, and called them unto Him and said, Suffer little children to come unto ME, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them." St. Matt. xix. 13; St. Luke xviii. 15; and St. Mark x. 13-16.

The phrase, "*Kingdom of God*" means the *Church* of God. And does not every word, in the passage just quoted, go to prove that our SAVIOUR regarded little children as fit subjects for His Kingdom? Hermas, who wrote during the Apostolic age, remarks, "All infants are valued by the Lord, and esteemed *first of all*." Simil. ix. c. 29. Well, therefore, does the Church say to those who bring little children to the font, "Doubt ye not, but earnestly believe, that He will likewise favorably receive these present infants; that He will embrace them with the arms of His mercy; that He will give unto them the blessing of eternal life, and make them partakers of His everlasting Kingdom."

III. Again, we are obliged to believe that children are entitled to the privilege of holy Baptism, because *they are distinctly included in the promises*.

When St. Peter preached his memorable sermon on the day of Pentecost, and many who heard him were convinced by his cogent reasoning, and asked, in all sincerity of heart, "What shall we do?" you rec-

collect his emphatic reply. "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of JESUS CHRIST, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the HOLY GHOST. For the promise is unto you, *and to your children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts ii. 38-9.

The Jews who heard these words of St. Peter's had always been accustomed to have their children enjoy the privileges of Church-membership with themselves: and if it had been his purpose to tell them that this rule must now be changed, this was a very curious way of doing it! And slow progress Christianity would have made, had it closed its doors more completely than Judaism had done!

IV. A fourth good reason for baptizing children is *the example of the Apostles, who baptized whole households.*

In the *sixteenth* chapter of the Book of Acts, we read of the baptism of Lydia, and her household, in the city of Thyatira; and the account sounds very much like that of a clergyman in our own time, who reports that in such a place he received such a person and her family into the Ark of CHRIST'S Church, by the appointed Sacrament.

Not long after the circumstance just spoken of, the jailor of Philippi, and his whole family, were baptized. Acts xvi. 31-2.

Here is an item from St. Paul's own journal. "I baptized the household of Stephanus." 1 Cor. i. 16.

The Syriac version of the New Testament, which was completed early in the second century, renders

the verse concerning Lydia and her *household*, as the baptism of Lydia and her *children*. And so, too, in the case of the Jailor and his household, and the household of Stephanus.

Again, "the baptism of several families in the New Testament is to be learned from implication—no *special* notice being taken of the event. We have sufficient reason for the belief that the families of Crispus and of Onesiphorus, of Aristobulus and Narcissus, and also of Cornelius, were baptized; but so usual were family baptisms that the HOLY SPIRIT deemed it sufficient merely to imply the fact, as in numerous cases of individual baptisms. And had the usual course of admitting their little children into covenant with God been departed from, and only heads of families, and those capable of self-responsibility, admitted to baptism, must not the character of these records have been different and family baptisms less common?"\*

V. Moreover, it seems to us a fair argument for infant baptism that even those most opposed to the practice agree *that when these little innocents die, before they have committed actual sin, they are fit to be received into Heaven*. And if fit for the Church triumphant, above—why not fit, we ask, for the Church militant on earth?

VI. A sixth argument for Infant Baptism is found in *the resemblance which it bears to the Jewish rite of circumcision*. By this rite, as you know, Jewish children, when eight days old, all unconscious of what was done

\* Hodges on Infant Baptism, p. 225.

for them. were brought into covenant with God ; a covenant of grace which was to secure to them pardon, holiness, and salvation. It was administered to all, of whatever nation, who united themselves to the people of God. When, in the course of Divine Providence, the seal of circumcision was changed to that of Baptism, the Christian Sacrament sanctioned all that the Jewish rite would have secured, had it continued to be observed. The conclusion follows, therefore, most naturally, that as children were made members of God's Church under the *old* dispensation, they are entitled to the same privilege under the *new*.

VII. Again, we enter our protest against those who oppose Infant Baptism, and we insist that it is a practice in accordance with God's will, *because it is nowhere forbidden*. The first question to be asked of people who would deprive children of the benefits of Baptism is, does the word of God command that they shall be shut out from His Kingdom? And when we remember that nineteen-twentieths of the Christian world practice infant baptism, and only a small fraction insist that the tender age of these little innocents disqualifies them for receiving this Sacrament, a thoughtful person may well inquire, can nineteen-twentieths of the Christian world be *wrong* in this matter ; and, is it likely that the one-twentieth can be *right*? Let this small body of religious people point out the passage in the Bible where the baptism of children is forbidden, and we will instantly abandon the practice.

VIII. But, I remark, still further, that we believe it

to be right to baptize children, *because it was practised in the Church from the days of the Apostles, for a period of nearly fifteen hundred years, without a dissenting voice.* I say this with no fear of contradiction, as the testimony of the early Fathers of the Church is too plain to be misunderstood.

The only question in regard to Infant Baptism which ever arose in the early ages of Christianity, was whether, as Baptism had taken the place of circumcision, it should be put off to the eighth day.

So universal was the practice of Infant Baptism, that for a long while there was no office for adult baptism in use in the English Church. Mar Yohannan, the Nestorian Bishop, who visited this country several years ago, remarked that he had never seen an adult baptized; the baptism of infants, in the East, being always observed.

IX. It appears to us, also, that even those who may not be prepared to acknowledge the binding obligation of Infant Baptism should bring their children to the font *on the ground that it is best to err on the safe side.* They will all freely admit that children can receive no sort of harm from it. And then, let such parents say to themselves, "Is it not a possible thing that we may be mistaken in our views of Infant Baptism? And will it not be safer and better to have our children christened, as so many millions of conscientious believers have done, and thus secure for them the blessings which they insist are bestowed in this Sacrament, than to incur the risk of our children losing them, from our wilful neglect?"

X. Once more. We insist upon the importance of Infant Baptism *because of the great and inestimable benefits secured by it.* The child is thus adopted into the family of GOD, and regenerated by the HOLY SPIRIT. From his earliest years he grows up as a Christian, and not as an alien and an outcast; and Heavenly grace is promised him as he advances in age, and temptations multiply about him. When the child thus trained up in the way he should go, is exposed to the allurements of Satan, who would draw him away from the comforts and securities of his HEAVENLY FATHER'S House, the probability that he will remain steadfast is immeasurably increased by the consideration that in order to become an apostate he must assume the fearful responsibility of renouncing allegiance to that GOD, to whose service loving parents had devoted him in the helpless period of his infancy.

If any of you, my friends, have hitherto neglected the baptism of your children, because you considered it an unimportant thing, I beg you to ponder the reasons which have now been presented; and see whether you are not doing a great wrong to them, and incurring much risk for yourselves, by thus presuming to be wise above that which is written.

## SERMON LI.

### THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

“Thou wilt not leave my soul in *Hell*, neither will Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.”—Acts ii. 27.

It is a peculiar glory of Christianity that it engages to rescue the *body* from the dominion of corruption and death, and thus to save the *whole man*, so “fearfully and wonderfully made.” It speaks not of “the immortality of the *soul*” (although divines have learned from philosophy to use the phrase), but of the immortality of man in *soul* and *body*, and every stage of its discipline is fitted to this fact.

Its *seals of grace*, the sacraments, have outward signs for the *body*, sealing and feeding the body to its immortality, and the Church provides for it Christian burial. All these have their root in the great fact of the *Incarnation*—“A body hast Thou prepared me.” So of doctrine. It, too, is fitted to the successive scenes in the amazing drama of existence, from “new birth” into God’s Kingdom of *grace*, to new birth into His Kingdom of *glory*, after the Judgment; and, therefore, neither the *Scriptures* in their revelations, nor the *creed* in its concise summary, omits a sufficient but emphatic mention of the scene between the death of the body and the Judgment—when we are “*absent from the body*,” having “descended into Hell.”



There is, perhaps, no article of the Christian faith upon which the generality of persons bestow less attention than that, in which we profess our belief, in Christ's descent into Hell. Some, regarding it as a doctrine "hard to be understood," hastily conclude that it is beyond their comprehension, and reject it without bestowing farther thought upon it.

Others take it for granted that it can claim no support from the Scriptures, and are content to attribute its adoption to a dark and ignorant age. While many more, either ignorantly confounding it with the unscriptural dogma of Purgatory, or timidly shrinking from what ignorance so confounds, shut their eyes to it and pass it over. Upon these slight grounds men are persuaded to disuse, or censure, or commit to oblivion a *truth* which the Church has embodied in her creed, and which her members have been taught to believe and live by ever since the days when Apostles and Martyrs presided in her councils, and died in her cause.

A far higher and more solemn estimate of this article will, it is thought, be made if we consider how the *analogy of the faith* (Rom. xii. 6) has been violated and impaired in the popular mind by its neglect. How common, in every day teaching, to hear the departed Christian, "absent for a time from the body," spoken of as having *gone to glory*, even its "perfect consummation and bliss;" passed at death, without the body, to its final blessedness; passing over resurrection and the judgment, and the fact of Death's temporary dominion, and that the death of the body is a *temporal penalty* of sin; one of a class, which, if neglected and unexplained,

gives a plausible footing to the notion of universal salvation, and other dangerous errors. These loose views are found in hymns, books and sermons, and to a great extent pervade the popular mind, while the Church corrects and forestalls them, in the case of her children, by frequent reference to the doctrines *connected with* and *deduced from* the "state of the departed" in her creed and prayers. Who can tell what ruin must ensue from the removal, or neglect of a single stone of the well compacted fabric of a Divinely revealed faith!

Thus the great practical argument for the intelligent profession of the doctrine of the intermediate state is, that it makes our faith and hope (which are the germs of our real life) *correspond to fact*.

The Christian makes a *sacrifice* in dying. Even Divine innocence submitted to the momentary sway of death not without an agony of wrestling. The body is *our* body, *intimately* and forever a *part* of us; to *give it up* is a *humiliation*, to *receive it again* the consummation of bliss. Judgment is to be passed on us *in the body*, for *its deeds*, *before* glory can be reached.

I ask your serious attention while I endeavor to *explain* and *enforce* the doctrine contained in the text.

It behooves us to approach our subject with reverent humility and modesty, content to know in *part*, but at the same time with *glowing gratitude* for the sufficient and gladdening light shining through the tomb, even *before* the glorious morning of the eternal Easter!

The Scriptures plainly teach that the righteous are not received into glory, nor the wicked consigned to everlasting punishment, until the resurrection morn

(St. Matt. xxv. 31-2; St. John v. 28-9, and xii. 48; Acts xvii. 31; Romans ii. 16; 2 Tim. iv. 1), when all kingdoms, and nations, and tongues shall be assembled to hear their final doom. It would be running counter to reason and revelation to suppose that the soul, when separated from the body, remains in a state of *unconsciousness* (St. Matt. xxii. 32; 2 Cor. v. 8, etc.); and the conclusion is irresistible, that, *between* death and the resurrection, a *separate* place, or state, or scene, must be provided for its reception.

The Church has ever taught the *existence* of such an *intermediate state*, where, in *distinct abodes*, the souls of the righteous and the wicked are either harassed by forebodings of the public denouncing of their awful doom, or waiting in joyful expectation for the consummation of their bliss.

The word rendered *Hell*, in our version of the Bible, corresponds in the original to *two* distinct words (שׁוֹלַם and ᾠδης), the one signifying a *secret and invisible place*, and hence applied to "the place of *departed spirits*;" and *Gehenna* (γέεννα), denoting the place of final torment.

Dr. Doddridge (the distinguished Presbyterian commentator) remarks that "Our English or Saxon word *Hell*, in its *original* signification (though it is now understood in a more limited sense), exactly answers to the Greek word *Hades*, and denotes a *concealed* or *unseen place*; and this sense of the word is still retained in the western countries of England; to *hell* over a thing is to *cover it*." See comments on Rev. i. 18.

The word is taken in this sense in the creed and in

the article (iii.), in both of which it is declared that Christ "descended into Hell."

But it would be *impious* to suppose that the soul of the Redeemer remained in the *place of torment* between His death and resurrection.

Besides, He assured the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in *Paradise*." St. Luke xxiii. 43.

And surely a place of hope and joy, and not of sorrow and despair, was provided for this penitent soul.

It is equally certain that Christ did not ascend into Heaven until *after* His resurrection, for he says to Mary Magdalen, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father." St. John xx. 17. It was then in that part of Hell—of the unseen world—of "the place of departed spirits," which is denominated a *Paradise*, or Abraham's bosom, where the *soul* of Jesus remained, while His *body* reposed in the tomb.

The Apostle looked forward to this abode of the blessed when he desired "to be absent from the body and present with the Lord," in this intermediate state, *waiting* till his spirit "should be clothed upon, with a house that is from Heaven."

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the saints of the old dispensation are represented as *still looking forward* for the glory which shall one day be revealed: "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that *they without us*, should not be made perfect," (xi. 39-40.)

"*No man* (says our Saviour) hath ascended up to *Heaven*, but He that *came down* from Heaven, even

the Son of man, Who is in Heaven." St. John iii. 13 Enoch and Elijah were not received into Heaven itself, but repose in that place of happiness and peace, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

St. Peter, in the text, quotes a passage from the 16th Psalm, which contains a prediction that the soul of Christ was to be in Hell, or "the place of departed spirits." But as this did not happen *before* His death, nor *after* His resurrection, it must have been *in the interval* between His death and resurrection.

"I saw *under the altar* (says St. John in the Apocalypse), the *souls* of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled," (vi. 9-11.)

We learn from this passage not only that the souls of the righteous are in a state of *consciousness* and *activity*, but also that they are waiting in an *intermediate state*. They are not yet standing before the throne, uniting in the "Song of Moses and the Lamb," but they are "*under th. altar.*" We learn, also, that they are in a state of *rest*. "It was said unto them that they should *rest for a little season.*" "Blessed are the dead

who die in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit; for they *rest* from their labors." Rev. xiv. 13.

This passage also teaches us that they enjoy a *fore-taste* of the bliss of Heaven, and are looking forward to higher and brighter rewards in the Heavenly mansions. "*White robes* were given unto every one of them; and it was said that they should *rest* for a *little season*, until their fellow servants and their brethren" should be united to them again.

The *evil* spirits and those who have been drawn into their snares are not yet consigned to the place of *final* torment. St. Jude tells us that even "The *Angels* who kept not their first estate, \* \* \* [the Lord] hath *reserved* in everlasting chains, under darkness, *unto* the judgment of the great day," (ver. 6.)

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the abode of the departed is represented as a vast region, in one division of which the soul of the beggar was reposing in "Abraham's bosom;" and in another, the rich man was in a state of suffering and despair. St. Luke xvi. 23.

In the book of Revelation (vi. 8) it is said, "I looked and beheld a pale horse: and *his* name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him." Here, by a bold figure, Hell (or "the place of departed spirits") is said to follow Death; the plain meaning of which is that when the *body* has yielded to the power of *Death*, the *soul* is received into Hell, or the invisible state. Again, we are told that "*Death and Hell delivered up the dead which were in them*" (xx. 13); in other words,

that hereafter *Death* should restore the *bodies*, and *Hell* the *souls* which are now under their control.

The same distinction between Paradise, or the intermediate state, and *Heaven* itself, which we have seen in the Scriptures, is found in early Jewish writers. In praying for a dying person they were accustomed to say, "Let him have his portion in Paradise, *and also in the world to come.*"

The doctrine which I have thus briefly explained is not only contained in the creed, and set forth in the articles, but interwoven in several of the prayers. We are taught to beseech God that "*we, and all those who have departed this life in His faith and fear, may be partakers of His Heavenly Kingdom.*" It is evident that the final happiness of *Heaven* is spoken of *as yet to be* possessed by the departed as well as by ourselves—an object of *hope* to both.

In the Burial Service we ask that "we, with all those who *are departed* in the true faith of His holy name, *may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul*, in His eternal and everlasting glory.\* The saints who have departed have not then been rewarded with "the fulness of joy," since God has seen fit that "without us *they* should not be made perfect." Though in a glorious *rest* they have not attained their *eternal* state.

Enough has, I think, been said to establish the fact that an *intermediate place* really exists, where the soul is to remain in a state of happiness or misery, un-

\* See also "Heavenly habitations" in prayer for a sick child.

*speakingly great* compared to *this* life, until the judgment of the last day shall *perfect* its *bliss*, or *seal* its *final doom*.

It has also been shown that the soul of the Redeemer, between His death and resurrection, *must* have remained in this place.

We cannot, for a moment, harbor the thought that it was *inactive* in that world of spirits. He whose *life* was spent in doing good, and who died for man's redemption, could not so soon forget the work of love which brought Him down from Heaven! *Reason* tells us this cannot be. *Revelation* confirms the fact. Death could but "kill the *body*." "God is not the God of the *dead* but of the *living*."

"*He went and preached* unto the spirits in prison (says St. Peter I. iii. 18-20), which *sometime* were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

In the words immediately preceding this verse the Apostle remarks that "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit."

Upon an examination of the passage in the original it will be found that the prepositions *in* and *by*, "*in the flesh*" and "*by the spirit*," have been inserted by the translators. The words *flesh* and *spirit* stand opposed to each other, the one denoting Christ's *body*, which was dead, and the other His *soul*, which was quickened.

The plain import of the passage, then, is this: Jesus



was put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit. He suffered and died on the cross, but His *soul* winged its way to *the place of departed spirits*, where patriarchs, and prophets, and martyrs are resting in hope, and enjoying a foretaste of their eternal reward.\*

This *place* is spoken of as a *prison*—Jesus “went and preached unto the spirits in *prison*.” By this we are not to understand a place of *punishment*, but of *safe-keeping*, where He who holds “the keys of Death and Hell” watches over the souls of the faithful, and points them to the gates of the new Jerusalem, which shall hereafter be opened to receive them.

In another part of this *prison*, or place of safe-keeping, the wicked already experience the torments of the lost, and behold afar off that region of despair, where, alas! the “never-dying worm” and the “unquenchable fire” shall be their dismal portion forever.

St. Peter goes on to specify the particular *class of persons* to whom our Saviour’s message was addressed. “He went and preached unto the spirits in prison: which *sometime* were disobedient; when once the long-

\* “If, instead of applying the term ‘the spirit’ to denote the part of Christ which was quickened, we suppose it to be the Divine Spirit, and thus make it the cause of His being quickened; as the word ‘flesh,’ in the original, stands in the same case, and is opposed to the word spirit, we shall then be forced to the absurd conclusion that the ‘flesh’ was the cause of Christ being put to death, and not the *part* of Him which suffered the pains of mortality.”—*Hobart’s Sermons*, ii. 2 and 3.

See also his treatise on the “State of the Departed;” also a similar work by Rev. J. W. McCullough, D. D.; and Bishop Horsley’s Sermon on this passage from St. Peter, etc.

suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." There is no declaration of the Bible which would necessarily lead us to suppose that *none* of the antediluvian race repented at the preaching of Noah; and that, with the exception of eight souls, *all* were consigned to everlasting punishment.

It is true God saw fit to preserve only a *remnant* to re-people the globe; and yet the judgment day may find many who perished in the waters of the flood who shall come forth from the place of the departed and dwell in the mansions of the blessed. Indeed, this idea is supported by St. Peter's language. He speaks of those in the days of Noah, who *sometime* were disobedient, plainly allowing the inference that *some*, whose wickedness provoked the just anger of God, *repented* under the preaching of His servant.

The question naturally arises, *why* was the message of Christ addressed *only* to the antediluvian race? The subject of His preaching must have been of interest to *every* dispensation. Why then *confine* it to a class comparatively *small*?

[It has been remarked by a profound theologian that there appears, "in some parts of Scripture, an *anxiety* (if the expression may be allowed) of the sacred writers to convey distinct intimations that the antediluvian race is not uninterested in the redemption and the final retribution. It is probably for this purpose that in the description of the general resurrection, in the visions of the Apocalypse, it is mentioned, with a particular emphasis, that the "*Sea gave up the dead who were in it,*" which I cannot be content to understand of the few

persons (few in comparison of the total of mankind) lost at different times by shipwreck; a *poor* circumstance to find a place in the midst of the magnificent images which surround it; but of the *myriads* who perished in the *general Deluge*, and found their tomb in the waters of that raging ocean." ]—*Bp. Hcrsley*.

Jesus is exhibited to us in the Bible as "the Lamb slain from the *foundation* of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8), and the evident design of St. Peter is to place, *beyond* the *possibility* of a *doubt*, this prominent article of our faith. The *darkest* page of the world's history is opened to our view, and while the "overflowing scourge" sweeps away the despisers of God's mercy, the fountain opened on Calvary, "for sin and for uncleanness," is seen to have sent forth *beforehand*, in the *Divine purposes*, its purifying waters, even for those "who *sometime* were *disobedient*, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

I am aware that divines have formed various estimates of the sense of these obscure intimations upon a subject *incapable*, perhaps, of clearer revelations to our present capacities.

I know, too, that its support has been claimed for the Pagan figment of a Purgatory, to which the idolatrous heart has, in all ages, so insanelý clung while *shrinking* from the "light affliction" of the *present* state. But however its *minute details* may be interpreted, its *general scope* is so in harmony with the argument of St. Peter in the Acts, and with the rest of Scripture, that the devout mind *must* be *grateful* for its light; and I may, therefore, turn to the *last* point to be noticed—the *subject* of our Saviour's reaching.

He no longer promised pardon and peace to those who should repent and believe; for the day of grace was ended, "the door" was forever "shut." He opened no way of escape to such as had rejected God's offers of mercy. "He that is *filthy* must be filthy still." Rev. xxii. 11. But he came to preach glad tidings to those who, though "*sometime* disobedient," had repented and "died in the Lord." He declared that "the seed of the woman" *had* "bruised the serpent's head;" that the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" *had* made an atonement for sin; that the curse of a violated law was forever removed; that the power of *Death* was destroyed, the *grave* despoiled of its prey; and that He who had died on the cross was about to intercede for His chosen in the presence of their God. Souls in Paradise might rejoice at such tidings as these! Worthy the message to fall from a *Redeemer's* lips!

A glowing pen has well described the scene. "We can imagine Him standing in the midst of a multitude which no man can number, who had gone down to the chambers of death with but indistinct and far off glimpses of the promised Messiah, and explaining to the eager assembly the beauty and stability of that deliverance which He had just wrought out, through obedience and blood shedding. \* \* Then, it may be, for the first time did Adam embrace all the magnificence of the promise that 'the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head;' and Abraham understand how the well-being of the human race depended on one that should spring from his own loins; and David ascertain all the meaning of mysterious strains which,

as prefiguring Messiah, he had swept from the harp-strings. Then, too, the long train of Aaron's line, who had stood at the altar and slain the victims, and burnt the incense, almost weighed down by a ritual, the import of whose ceremonies was but indistinctly made known—then, it may be, they were suddenly and sublimely taught the power of every figure, and the expression of every rite; whilst the noble company of prophets, holy men, who 'spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' but who, rapt in the *future*, uttered much which only the *future* could develop—these, as though starting from the sleep of ages, realized *that* truth which they had been commissioned to convey, but over whose spreadings there had rested the cloud and the mist; and Isaiah thrilled at the glories of his own saying: 'Unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given;' and Hosea grasped all the mightiness of the declaration which he had poured forth whilst denouncing the apostasies of Samaria, 'O Death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.'"\*

The doctrine of our text suggests one or two practical reflections, which deserve to be kept ever in mind.

To the *Christian* the subject is full of consolation and peace. He looks forward to no long repose with the dead. His soul, the moment it is freed from this tenement of clay, is borne to that region of bliss, where a foretaste of Heaven is enjoyed. The blessed company of Patriarchs, and Apostles, and Martyrs are waiting to receive him. "The saints of all ages in harmony meet," and "the children of Zion" are "*joyful* in

\* Melvill's Sermons, vol. I. p. 49.

their King." Delivered from the burden of the flesh, their souls shall be with the Lord Jesus, the rays of whose glory sanctify and cheer the *Paradise* of His Saints. Here they shall enjoy perpetual peace; anticipating their "consummation in body and soul in God's eternal and everlasting glory."

But to the wicked the text speaks nothing but *terror*. Death cuts short their existence, and there remains no rest in the grave.

The season of probation is ended. Despair and remorse banish all hope; the "never-dying worm" has begun to torment; the abode of the lost is already in view.

Dear brethren, let us flee *now* to the source of consolation and strength! Let us believe and obey the commandments of Him Who "descended into Hell," and "rose from the dead," and we need "fear no evil" when the hour of *departure* comes; but "through the grave and gate of Death" we shall "pass to a joyful resurrection."

That *such* may be the happy portion of *us all*, may God of His infinite mercy grant, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

## SERMON LI.

### IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

“Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?”—Jas xiv. 10.

“Tell us, ye dead! will none of you, in pity  
To those you left behind, disclose the secret?”

WE wish, and wait, but no answer is returned. Is the future, then, wrapt in dim uncertainty? Does the shadowy veil which hides the dark valley of death from mortal ken shut out all light beyond? Is the grim Destroyer to drag us away from the enjoyments of life, and, with a ghastly smile, bid us enter upon a region all unknown?

Time was, when this, most certainly, was the case. Reason soared aloft, and philosophy toiled and studied, and yet to the solemn question, “*Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?*” no response was heard but doubtful conjectures, and unsatisfying dreams. But now, thanks to the tender mercy of God, “life and immortality” are brought “to light through the Gospel.” 2 Tim. i. 10. Aye, there is something within the Christian which convinces him beyond a doubt, that “This mortal *must* put on immortality.” 1 Cor. xv. 53

“A voice within us speaks the startling word,  
‘Man, thou shalt never die!’ Celestial voices

Hymn it around our souls ; according harps,  
By angel fingers touched, when the mild stars  
Of morning sang together, sound forth still  
The song of our great immortality !”

The people of France once wrote over the gates of their burial places, “Death is an eternal sleep!” but this was only when the nation had run mad. The ordinary mode of proving the immortality of the soul is simple enough.

First, it is very properly argued from the nature of the soul itself—especially from its immateriality. While the *body* may be considered as a complicated and beautiful *piece of machinery*, the *soul is a living and enduring power*. And we know that even the body (our poorer possession), is not wholly destroyed by death—but that it is simply decomposed ; and so, we reason, that the soul can dread no annihilation. Again, the love of life, which is common to us all—and the repulsion which we feel, at the bare thought of sinking into nothingness, afford another strong ground of probability. And can it be said that the good Lord has implanted such a desire and longing after immortality, which He does not mean to satisfy ? Would HE mock His creatures with vain hopes ?

The nature of God seems also to favor the idea that He who made the soul capable of such vast improvement, and such constant advances towards perfection, would never suffer it to perish. “The existence of the Deity,” said the distinguished statesman, Mr. Fox, in his last days, “The existence of the Deity is a proof that spirit exists ; why not, therefore, the soul



of man? And if such an essence as the soul exists, by its nature it may exist forever. I should have believed in the immortality of the soul, even if Christianity had taught us nothing concerning it."

But these probabilities are further strengthened from the fact that belief in man's immortality is universal. No race of savages can be found, so debased and blind, as not to have some glimmerings of this truth. The Indian, who buries the weapons of war and the chase, with the body of the deceased warrior, is looking forward to the time when he will need them again in the hunting-grounds of the brave and the good.

The hopes and aspirations of the old philosophers led them to peer, with anxious gaze, into the dim and mysterious future. Some, indeed, were enabled to derive no small comfort from their reflections on the nature and destiny of the soul.

Again, we claim immortality as the heritage of man, because, on any other supposition, all the analogies of nature would be violated. Can it be fairly supposed that while all forms of vegetable and animal life develop the various powers with which they are endowed, and finish the purposes of their existence, man alone is cut short in the midst of his more glorious career, with the purposes of his higher nature but partially carried out? I ask the fond parent who has consigned her darling child to the cold and dreary grave, whether she can persuade herself that the sweet innocent who brought so much gladness to her bosom, no longer exists? I appeal to dutiful sons and daugh-

ers who have stood by the dying beds of fathers and mothers who had served God, all their lives long, with true and faithful hearts, and whose last moments were cheered by such peace and assurance as the world can never give!

I boldly appeal to such to testify whether they can harbor the harrowing thought that nothing is now left of those loved ones but a handful of dust, and a few unsightly bones?

Once more—we insist that man must be immortal, and that he must continue to live on in another state of being, because all this is indispensable to explain certain inequalities of happiness and misery on earth—inequalities which a just God would never allow, unless it was His good pleasure to make them right, when the throne of Eternal Judgment shall be set up, and the book of His remembrance shall be opened.

There is deep malignity concealed under the apparently well-intentioned remark of Gibbon, in his “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,” that “It is incumbent on us to adore the mysterious dispensation of Providence, when we discover that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is omitted in the law of Moses; it is darkly insinuated by the Prophets; and during the long period which elapsed between the Egyptian and Babylonian Servitudes, the hopes, as well as the fears of the Jews appear to have been confined within the narrow compass of the present life.”

There is just enough truth in this passage to make it exceedingly dangerous. Although the books of Moses do not contain any very marked, or minute

statements in regard to a future state, yet facts are incidentally mentioned, which clearly imply such a doctrine. Thus, could a devout Jew have been made to believe that the gentle and obedient Abel, whose sacrifice of the firstlings of his flock was graciously accepted by the ALMIGHTY, would have been suffered to be brutally murdered, unless a better and a happier home had been prepared for him? And what meaning has the history of Enoch's wonderful translation, except that the Lord looked with favor upon his humble and holy walk before HIM, and exalted him to a state of immortality and bliss?

Surely the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews knew what he was writing about when he said that "the fathers did not look for transitory promises;" that "they sought a better country, even a Heavenly;" and that "God hath prepared for them a city;" and that Moses himself, whom the infidel historian represents as so woefully in the dark on the subject—rejected "the enjoyment of the pleasures of sin for a season," in the magnificent court of the Egyptian King, because "he had respect to the recompense of the reward hereafter." It requires no uncommon penetration to discover a reason why the doctrine of which I am speaking should not have been made a prominent one, while the Israelities were surrounded by heathen nations. The immortality of the soul, in one form or other, was held by them all; but, by some, especially the Egyptians, it was closely interwoven with the notion of the transmigration of souls. So long, then, as the Jews were exposed to such contami-

nating influences, Moses preserved a comparative silence on the subject, and waited for a more fitting opportunity for its further development. And when, in the course of Divine Providence, the chosen tribes were delivered from the hands of their enemies, and the Ark rested on Mount Zion, no such caution was deemed needful. Is it fair, therefore, to assert, as this unblushing infidel has done, that the doctrine of the soul's immortality was "only darkly insinuated by the Prophets," when Isaiah is heard to declare, as an occasion for rejoicing to the afflicted Church, "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead?" Is. xxvi. 19.

Was it only "darkly insinuated," when Daniel ventures to predict, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame, and everlasting contempt?" xii. 2.

Was it only "darkly insinuated," I ask, when Hosea boldly declares, speaking in the Person of HIM who is the "resurrection and the life," "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O Death, I will be thy plagues—O grave, I will be thy destruction?" xiii. 14.

Was it only "darkly insinuated" (as Gibbon so flippantly asserts), when HE, to whom gave all the prophets witness, positively affirms, "The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life;

and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation?" St. John v. 28, 29.

Man is generally called a *rational being*; but he hardly deserves the name, while attempting to undermine our faith in that consoling doctrine which alone renders life worth having, and robs death of its terrors. Nor can those persons be considered much more deserving of regard, who live and act as if they had no immortal souls to save. Socrates wondered, in his day, when he observed statuaries laboring most industriously to carve out stones into the shapes of men, while men, meanwhile, by debasing habits, were turning themselves into stones. Had he lived in our time, his amazement would have been greater still.

A skilful jeweller, who has expended the utmost pains in making some exquisite piece of art, is sorely troubled to see it fall into the hands of children or half-witted people, who have no idea of its intrinsic worth. And so the great CREATOR, who has made the soul after a Divine image, is grieved and vexed, at beholding the perverseness of such as treat it as something of no value, and even barter it off for a trifling temporal good.

"Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" The question can readily be answered, because the Bible has done it for us. Have our departed friends gone hence with the testimony of a good conscience, having served God, in their day and generation, in faith and holiness? In all such cases, the response comes back from the world of spirits, full of peace: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Even so saith

•

the SPIRIT, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." Rev. xiv. 13.

Have any stubbornly refused to be numbered among the followers of JESUS; doing their own pleasure, and yielding without a struggle to the desires of the flesh? The answer is no less distinct: "God will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." Romans ii. 9.

O, then, my friends, be wise while you may. In the midst of business and pleasure; in moments of gladness and grief; at all times, and in all places, let your real interest and happiness be looked after—the interest and happiness of soul and body.

And may the God of all grace help you in the great and life-long work of subduing the flesh to the spirit, and in preparing for the hour of death, and for the day of Judgment!

THE END.

## NOTICES OF THE PRESS.

---

The following notices of the Press are a portion of the notices which appeared on the publication of the first edition. Dr. Norton has now more than doubled the size of the work, and greatly improved its value by his larger experience. No sermons it is believed have greater adaptation to instruct and interest when read in families or in Churches.

This volume contains twenty-seven sermons. They are short, direct, impressive, and have much interest of truth, style, and narrative. They are happily adapted for family reading, and for use in vacant parishes. We rejoice in every opportunity of extending the usefulness of the faithful pastor. We wish there were more gifts employed in the Church in producing a literature to meet the wants of the Church. The action of living minds is a want which no foreign adaptations can exactly meet. Mr. Norton deserves the thanks of the Church for this volume, and we feel confident that it will be extensively appreciated.—*Banner of the Cross.*

"Short Sermons" is a book true to its title, as all who are familiar with the gifted preacher in the pulpit well know. And the same persons will find in these printed sermons the pith, and point, and telling force which they were accustomed to admire in the singularly impressive preaching of Mr. Norton. It is the best volume of sermons we have seen for the family, and for lay-reading in the churches, or for an assembly of neighbors in the country on Sunday, when there is no regularly appointed public worship.—*Louisville Journal.*

A series of brief, plain, practical, and pointed sermons. The author has done a good work in giving this volume to the public.—*Gospel Messenger.*

The author seeks plainness and point, and draws freely upon all lawful sources for illustrations to enforce his thoughts. The style is easy and pleasant: the enforcement of truth, earnest and affectionate. We doubt not but that the reputation secured to the author by his former books will cause the present volume to be sought for with interest; and we feel sure that it cannot be read without profit.—*The Monitor.*

These sermons are commendably plain, homely, and yet—if we may borrow an epithet that is generally applied to a story, and give it to a sermon,—entertaining. They might be much larger than they are, and not be tiresome ;—for the style is so terse and simple, so much like talk, and the subjects are so practical, and the anecdotes and illustrations are so frequent, and so apt and pointed, that the man must be very ignorant, or very drowsy, who should find it difficult to give them his attention.—*Churchman's Monthly Magazine.*

Our readers are too well acquainted with Mr. Norton, to need more than the announcement of a new book from him to know that it must be worth having. A volume of his *sermons* has been issued, which will be found excellent for use in many parishes. Sound, clear, straight-forward, homely, vernacular in style, they are just the thing to teach people what they need to know, in language which they can easily understand. For lay-readers, and deacons who have no license to preach their own sermons, as well as for private reading, these sermons will find a warm and well-deserved welcome.—*Chicago Journal.*

These sermons are clear, comprehensive, and true to nature, and they cannot fail of interesting and instructing all who read them. The volume seems to us to be well adapted to the present wants of the Church and the world. We commend it to all our readers, and more especially to the young.—*Calendar.*

A capital little book, containing a great deal that is good, and earnest, and true, well timed, and happily spoken.—*Register.*



# SERMONS,

## PUBLISHED BY H. HOOKER,

911 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA.

*Any of these Books sent by mail free on receipt of prices annexed.*

---

DR. HALLAM'S SERMONS. 12mo. Price \$1.00.  
DR. VINTON'S SERMONS. 12mo. Price \$1.00.  
DR. COXE'S SERMONS. 12mo. Price \$1.00.  
BISHOP BURGESS'S SERMONS. 12mo. Price \$1.00.  
DR. PUSEY'S PARISH SERMONS. 12mo. \$1.50.  
DR. NORTON'S FIFTY-TWO SERMONS. 12mo. Price \$1.50.

---

PLAIN COMMENTARY. 2 volumes. 8vo. Price \$5.00.  
WADSWORTH'S LECTURES ON THE APOCALYPSE.  
1 volume. 8vo. Price \$2.50.

WADSWORTH ON THE CANON INSPIRATION OF  
HOLY SCRIPTURES. 1 volume. 8vo. Price \$1.50.

MELVILL'S SERMONS. 2 volumes. 8vo. Price \$4.50.

MELVILL'S LECTURES. 1 volume. 8vo. Price \$2.00.

HOMILIES OF THE CHURCH. 1 vol. 8vo. Price \$2.50.

CHRISTIAN BALLADS. By DR. COXE. Cloth. Price 63 cts.

" " Blue and Gold. Price \$1.00.

KEBLE'S CHRISTIAN YEAR. Muslin, Gilt. Price \$1.00.

" " " Cloth. Price 63 cts.

NORTON'S LIFE OF DAVID. 12mo. Price 50 cts.

SHERWOOD'S STORIES ON THE CATECHISM. 12mo.  
\$1.00.

KIP'S DOUBLE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH. 12mo.  
Price \$1.00.

TRENCH'S HULSEAN LECTURES. 12mo. Price 88 cts.

TRENCH'S STAR OF THE WISE MEN. 12mo. Price 50 cts.

EUCCHARISTICA; OR, COMMUNICANT'S MANUAL.

By the Bishop of Oxford. 18mo. Plain, 50 cts.

Red edges, 60 cts.



137  
5937  
1788  
86  
1868

Norton  
Short Sermons

473905

2- 12659

2005

2- 12659

2- 12659

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



48 451 507

